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(l to r) Sydney, Celina and Sloane Raymond from Aurora, Colo., were born Nov. 21, 2003. Sydney is the organizer and neatness freak, Celina loves to sing and dance, and Sloane loves to disassemble and reprogram everything. When they aren't busy organizing, singing or reprogramming, they love to ride their bikes.

Cover Photography by Covalli Photography

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Are we failing our children by not “being The Boss?”

Parents seem to have a difficult time in today’s world viewing themselves as “The Boss.” We’ve all read about myriad problems this spawns—kids who grow up without any solid rules or parameters, lacking expectations for how they will behave in polite society. So many kids grow up disrespecting authority of every kind—teachers, parents, relatives, people who provide service in stores and restaurants.

Kids these days very often never know any strict “rules of the game” other than that they’re expected to “be happy” and get good grades. Quite often they accomplish neither. They fight violently, call their parents names and slap them, assault teachers, take guns to school, experiment with drugs, have sex when they’re still literally children.

Maybe I’m overstating the problem, but I don’t think so. Many kids I encounter seem mighty confused about how they’re really supposed to behave. They want to be good kids but they don’t know the rules. So they misbehave, and they act like brats. No one has ever been strict with them and demanded specific behavior. Seems to me that the “laissez-faire parenting” approach of the last 40 years isn’t working well.

We appear to be living with a population of three generations of people who are simply uncomfortable with the idea of being in charge of their lives or anything else, especially their kids.

Is this happening because parents today are themselves products of the Spock generation in which parents were taught it is always wrong to spank children? Is it because the theory that “young kids are smart enough to figure everything out for themselves” has taken over completely, and failed? Is it because parents attempt to negotiate everything with their children, even when the kids are much too young to understand choices and negotiation? Do we fear being “too controlling” of our kids?

Parents of twins experience a double-whammy of what I dub “the kid assault”...endless attempts from the day children are born to manipulate Mom and Dad into being willing to compromise on virtually everything, to avoid confrontation, anger, the impulse to spank. The fact our world of parenting is being turned on its head is evident

by the enormous success of such shows as *Super-Nanny*, *Dr. Phil*, and *Oprah*, where millions of people watch with fascination as dysfunctional families in conflict bare their souls in front of the camera.

Look around you—isn’t just about everybody you know fretting constantly about how to “maintain a relationship” with their kids, and win their love at every turn, rather than just doing what needs to be done to be a parent, regardless of what that takes? Who’s in charge here?

Turn to the Bedtime Battles article, page 19, and read the three letters from parents of twins who are at the ends of their ropes when it comes to putting their children to bed. Each night brings chaos, screaming, whining, endless battles and kids getting up repeatedly, keeping each other awake, and driving parents to the point of total exhaustion. Twins-Nanny Michelle LaRowe lays out her Master Plan for teaching kids how to go to bed and stay there, and feel good about it.

This is a complex set of issues—setting rules; enforcing rules; teaching manners and courtesy; disciplining children for misbehavior; being a parent, not a friend, to your kids; taking charge and feeling comfortable being the boss; being a good mentor and manager of your children, and not fearing their lifelong hatred of you for it.

I have developed a couple of theories about parenting: Theory #1: Parents need to repeat this mantra 10 times each day: I’m the Boss! I’m in charge! I’m the grown-up here! My job is to be a parent, not a friend, to my kids.

Theory #2: Parents can and should be both strict (i.e., “controlling”) and loving at the same time. Kids become confused, angry, rebellious and constantly “act out” if their parents aren’t tough, smart and clear about the rules.

What do you personally believe is the BEST way for parents to assume the role of The Boss, and stick to your guns? Send your e-mail on SETTING RULES to twins.editor@businessword.com



Susan Alt
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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PUBLISHER

Donald E.L. Johnson

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Susan J. Alt
(303) 967-0128

twins.editor@businessword.com

ART DIRECTOR/WEBMASTER

Carolyn Diaz Muñoz
(303) 967-0134

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Susan J. Alt
susan.alt@businessword.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Richard Rhinehart

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Sonya Craney
(888) 55-TWINS

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

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

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

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Separate gifts? No way!

I love your magazine and have been receiving it for three years now. I wanted to address the article in the July/Aug issue, "What's mine is mine!"

The author's suggestion of having each twin give a separate gift to each family member and each friend on gift-giving occasions, is, in my opinion, a little extreme. And very costly over the long run! I do not feel this necessarily helps twins establish separate identities.

I have identical girls who will be turning 3 shortly and three older teenagers as well. While my older three were children, gifts to family/friends from the kids were always from all three of them. I could not imagine the expense of buying three separate gifts each time. Granted, my older three are not twins and may not have had issues with separate identities. But I tend to think parents may be a little too paranoid regarding their twins in this respect.

By having each twin 'in charge' of something regarding a single gift can develop their individuality in itself. For instance, one can pick out the card, while the other picks the paper in which to wrap the gift, etc.

A gift to Grandma and Grandpa is from all five kids and not from each one individually...at least according to my pocketbook!

2blessed on the TMMB
Via e-mail

Swimming in twins



At a recent family birthday party in Portland, Maine, we realized we had a ton of twins among the guests and decided to take a picture of all of us. We found we had full sets and another two half-sets. All of us are related, mostly by blood, one set by (marriage) relationship.

My husband and aunt are the two "half-sets" appearing in this picture. My twin and I are in the picture too—I'm a fraternal twin married to a fraternal twin. Also pictured are my twin sister's identical twin sons, my cousin's fraternal twin daughters, my twin sister's partner and her partner's identical twin sister.

More recently, a bunch of us attended a Portland Seadogs game (minor baseball league) and as we were seated, we realized out of

11 of us, eight are twins!
Priscilla A. Arsenault
Sanford, Me.
Via e-mail



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Dr. William Sears
Author and child care specialist



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Bilingual twins

I apologize that I am slightly behind in my reading—I am sure I am not the only mother of twins in that situation. I am just now coming across the topic of raising bilingual twins (Sept./Oct., 2006) and wanted to respond.

My 28-month-old boy/girl twins are being raised bilingually with the OPOL philosophy (One Parent One Language). This means I speak only Spanish to them at all times, and my husband speaks only English to them at all times. We find this limits mixing of the two languages, either with vocabulary or grammatical rules.

Both children are fluent in both languages, speak in full sentences and were not really delayed at all, even though we were warned that twins are sometimes delayed and bilingual children can be delayed.

My twins know who speaks which language, so that when my mother or brother are visiting the kids speak in Spanish to them. But they don't speak Spanish to anyone they know doesn't speak Spanish. Occasionally they will use a Spanish word if they don't know the English equivalent, but for the most part they just don't say anything. For example, if they don't know the word cucumber (which they know in Spanish), they will just say "I have 'this' (and point) on my plate."

They will even translate for my husband who doesn't speak Spanish, so if they ask me for more milk and I say, "Ask Papa," they will turn to him and repeat the request in English.

Diana Bloom
Tampa, Florida
Via e-mail

Plagiocephaly orthotics

We were pleased with the article about our son Jacob's plagiocephaly in your March/April, 2006, issue and hope it helps your readers. During the editing process, a sidebar story was inserted into the article discussing the DOC band, along with a picture of two children wearing a helmet made by a company called Cranial Technologies, Inc. Casual readers might have inferred from this mention that CTI is the only company making such products. There are several companies that manufacture cranial remolding orthotics. Our son Jacob's helmet is a STARband, created by Orthoamerica.

Susan Carney
Via e-mail

Potty trained at 19 weeks

I am the mother of fraternal twin girls. I subscribe to your magazine. I am curious how young your readers potty train their babies. We started our girls at 3 months: Tried them once and they did not like it, but they both pee-peed. We tried again at 4 months and they did not do anything. The other day my youngest decided she liked it—they are now 19 weeks old. She has been to the potty 10-12 times (and peed every time; pooped once). She lets us know when she wants to go. We don't force it, but she likes it. Two nights ago she slept 10 to 5 without wetting a diaper. We finally decided she

wanted to go and she did. She has taken several naps and not wet her diaper. Both twins pee-peed tonight after their naps. It is safe to say they should be potty-trained before they're a year old. Any advice or comments on what to do next? Have other people's babies accomplished potty-training this early?

Jennifer Coffey
Aiken, S.C.

Editor's note: You're doing great! How could anyone give you advice on what next—your kids are learning quickly. We had an article on early potty training of very young infants in the March/April, 2006, issue. More parents all the time are learning that their tiny babies have good brains and catch on quickly. This is a major trend, nationally.



Amazing discovery! Another family like ours

After four years of receiving your magazine, I would have never imagined reading about Epidermolysis Bullosa (*Twins with a twist*, July/Aug. 2006). I have 4-year-old boy twins, Christian and Christopher, who both have what is known as Dominant Dystrophic EB. This disease is so rare that reading about it in your magazine actually

made me feel special. I finally felt that I can relate to someone just like me. Thank you, Tracey, for sharing your story.

Magaly Escobar
Billing and Collections Manager
Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami

Editor's note: We are pleased and proud to say we had a role in helping these families join forces to share information and become friends. They are now in touch by phone and e-mail with each other. This is a part of publishing that is so gratifying!

Thank you for publishing my story, *Twins with a twist* (July/Aug., 2006). I am so proud to be able to spread the word about EB and educate others about it. EB has been quite devastating for our family, but we are learning more about it every day. The more people who know about EB, the easier it will be for families with EB to be accepted.

I want to mention the exceptional work of the Debra Foundation (Debra.org). They deserve a lot of credit for the work they do for families with EB. I can almost bet that anyone who has EB has been helped by them at least once, and most, many times. They have helped our family tremendously with our path to learning about and taking care of our daughter's EB. The foundation has a very helpful website. We have personally benefited from the foundation's New Family Advocate program, which educates families, provides support and helps with needed supplies. Debra and many other families with EB helped get us through those very tough first few months. They really deserve some credit for my article.

The sidebar story about the clinical aspects of EB by Dr. Rebecca

Moskwinski seemed to downplay our daughter's condition, making it seem less traumatic than it really is. EB is an awful thing to deal with on a daily basis. All forms of EB are life-threatening and can be devastating, even the so-called lesser forms. We are very fortunate our daughter has the Simplex, Dowling Meera form—we know it could be much worse! All forms of EB scar terribly, however, contrary to what Dr. Moskwinski stated. For instance, our daughter's condition will never simply disappear! I know quite a few adults with our daughter's form of the disease and it still continues to be a constant part of their lives, although it becomes more manageable as you grow accustomed to the limitations it imposes, and there are many.

Tracey Sharp
Via e-mail

TTTS miracle survivors

Hailey and Cassidy are miracle twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome children. We discovered this rare problem nine weeks into my daughter's pregnancy and were told not to expect them to survive past 14 weeks. Here we had just found out my daughter Kate was expecting twins, then were told almost immediately most TTTS babies don't make it. At best, only one baby would have a 60% chance of survival. Hailey was the bigger twin, practically swimming in amniotic fluid; Cassidy was nearly shrink-wrapped.

We were given an education on TTTS and the odds didn't look good to us. But along about the fifth month, Cassidy's sac started filling with lifesaving fluid and had almost corrected itself by the time they were born, six weeks prematurely. Hailey had a bit of a respiratory problem and a heart murmur at birth, and both girls were in ICU for almost two weeks, followed by heart-monitoring for another few weeks.

Today, they are both healthy, happy, lively and brilliant little 3-year-olds who are the lights of our lives.

Rabona Gordon, grandmother of twins
Marietta, Ga.

Cover pictures

How do you decide on your cover pictures? Do you accept submissions? I sent you two pictures, but I'm not even sure how you go about choosing them. I have been a subscriber for a number of years and I am active on the TWINS™ Message Board, but I have never heard about your covers and the selection process.

Kelly Ksenycz
Via e-mail

How do you choose who will be on the front cover? I am interested because I have 6-month-old twin boys. Are we allowed to send you pictures?

Marcy Johnson
Via e-mail

Editor's note: Our Art Director, Carolyn Muñoz, and I always wish we had much more space in which to run more pictures. We receive hundreds

of darling pictures every month from parents of twins. It's really tough to decide which ones will run in Double Takes in each issue.

We're unable to use candid photos for TWINS™ cover shots. We really have to have professional photographs for the cover, because we need very high-resolution pictures that won't look grainy or blurry when we "come in close" and enlarge the children's heads for the cover. Also, backgrounds need to be relatively plain and the children's heads and bodies need to be very close together in order to fit them onto a cover and have TWINS™ look professional alongside all the other parenting magazines. The composition also must leave adequate space for a number of headlines.

For those reasons, we don't accept submissions. We always do our cover photo-shoots at various places around Colorado, using Colorado kids.... as you can well imagine, sometimes the kids aren't in the right mood(s), sometimes they're fidgety or crying or whatever, so we generally will have two or three sets of kids at a single photo-shoot, and we dress them up and then try to pose them (HA! That's a laugh!) the ways we want and need them for covers. It's very tricky. Sometimes even the best-laid plans for cover photos go awry...you know how it is with twins! For example, sometimes the weather doesn't cooperate. Or the babies/kids don't cooperate—they throw tantrums or run in all directions. Or the clothes aren't right. Or the setting turns out to be a disaster. Or one kid falls and gets muddy. Or one twin yanks a toy away from the other and makes her brother wail for 20 minutes. A million things can go wrong. And then we have to re-shoot. It's always iffy.

That's probably more than you ever wanted to know about the ins and outs of doing magazine covers, right?

We keep file banks of well-done twin photos—each photo is labeled with the names of kids and family, and a photo release form—that we use to illustrate our stories and articles. Our photo files are labeled as to the type of shots....costumes, holidays, sweetness/hugging/kissing, action, vacation (beach, etc), outdoors playtime, games/puzzles/reading, and so on. We search our file banks a lot as we're producing each issue.

I suspect the pictures you submitted went into our photo files,....so some day you may see one of yours pop up in the magazine. Stay tuned.

Dwarf moms of twins link up

I am a mother of identical twin girls, 8 months, in Wisconsin. I read the letter to the editor in Mailbox in the July/August, 2006, issue of TWINS™ from Robin Worley in Chattanooga, who is a dwarf mother of ID dwarf twin sons. I, too, am a dwarf, as is my husband and my twin girls. Like Robin's sons, my daughters were born prematurely as well. I plan to get in touch with Robin—we'll have a lot to talk about! Thanks for running her letter and making it possible for us to get in touch.

Kristin Peterson
Wisconsin
Via phone

Sugar may not cause hyperactivity, but food dyes sure do!

This is in response to "Mythbusting: Twins, Sugar and Hyperactivity" (July/August 2006). I agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Steven Sainsbury that sugar does not cause hyperactivity or ADD/ADHD. However, I was disappointed that the article focused solely on sugar

and not food dyes and “particularly synthetic colors” to which Dr. Benjamin Feingold, M.D., suggests the degree of a child’s hyperactive behavior is linked.

I know for a fact that Red Dye #40 causes my otherwise calm and well behaved 6-year-old daughter to become “buzzed,” as I call it! She basically bounces off the walls, can’t stop talking, humming, or moving, and tends to act more impulsively and aggressively after consuming something with this dye in it. And let me tell you, Red Dye #40 is in a lot of stuff—for instance, fruit punch and the sprinkles on top of chocolate cupcakes. It’s in the pink-colored liquid antibiotics. (We always ask for the white liquid antibiotics now.) It’s in breakfast cereals galore!

Before I knew she had this problem, I once fed my daughter Fruit Loops before attending playgroup. Let’s just say when we left, I thought I would never take her back to playgroup because she was just out of control.

I’ve often wondered how many children are being medicated for ADD/ADHD when their problem could be controlled with the elimination of (foods, drinks and other substances containing) Red Dye. My daughter’s reaction to Red Dye #40 was not discovered until she was about 4 years old. So far, we have not seen this type of reaction in our 4-year-old son or our 12-month-old twins. It does not seem to affect everyone the same. It does run in our family, though, affecting both my brother and my nephew.

So I believe Dr. Feingold is right on about the synthetic colors, and I would say to anyone with concerns about their child’s hyperactivity, consider eliminating Red Dye #40 first.

Cindy Russell
Via e-mail

‘Are they identical?’

As the father of the boy/girl twins in picture #5 of July/August’s Double Takes, I’d like to clarify that we never claimed they were monozygotic! The mass confusion in the (Sept./Oct.) issue’s Mailbox (over whether boy/girl twins could ever be monozygotic/identical) left me feeling like I had been somehow accused of making such a claim in a rash attempt to get their photo published. So, for the record, they are plain old fraternal twins.

Still, though, it’s interesting to hear it’s possible for b/g twins to be monozygotic. It would make all the people asking us if they’re “fraternal or identical” seem slightly less clueless...

David Brooks
Via e-mail

Editor’s note: It was a plain old typographical error on our part, so we apologize to David and his cute kids, Greyson and Caroline. But the humor is appreciated.

Tubby trials, chapter 2

Thank you so much (again) for your support and help in our Tubby Time Trouble issues. Taking the time to contact me and to send me possible solutions was great. Your support helped my

husband and me feel a little less alone during all of the turmoil going on.

I also thank you so much for running the picture of our daughters with our question. What a huge surprise it was to turn to page 20 of the Sept./Oct. issue (Family Talk) and see two very familiar faces smiling back at me. Our family is so thrilled by it!



Ashlyn and Caedance

As an update to our Tubby Trials, I am pleased to announce that with a lot of patience, and after trying a lot of different things, we finally have Ashlyn and Caedance in the tub again. We found out they like to take showers, so we’ll put them in the shower with the drain plugged. They like to play “Catch It” with the cascading water, and then, when the tub is full enough for a bath, they don’t mind so much sitting in it and getting bathed.

I still dream about the days we used to have when they would literally drag us upstairs to give them a bath. I miss those days. For the life of us we cannot understand why they entered this stage, but we prayed they would leave it quickly. At the 2-month stage, our morale really needed some rallying. My husband’s sister has twin girls, too, and she called me to say how much her girls love bath-time. I could only say, “Enjoy it while it lasts, for it may be all too fleeting, leaving you with only memories of happier times when the bathroom was filled with the gleeful sound of splashing and giggles, not blood-curdling screams.” I took those days for granted!

It is so nice to know that there is a resource out there that is so accessible for parents of twins. I love knowing that my question gets heard (rather, read) and is considered. That really means something. Thank you!

This has been a very slow progression, adding a little bit more to the routine over the course of a few months. We also found (in case any other readers ever have an issue like this) that those foam letters/numbers you can buy were a HUGE bath-time hit.

The letters only come out when it’s time for a bath—I began coaxing them into the tub by putting the letters/numbers into the dry, unfilled tub. The girls would play with them happily, but watched with a wary eye if I tried to turn on the water. We’d take the girls out, give them a sponge bath, and continue on our way. Next time, I’d put a scant amount of warm water in the tub, let them play with the letters, but not bathe them—sponge bath later. Eventually, the tub had water and the shower was running, and two little girls got a real bath. Now they start calling out “Letters!” the minute they enter the bathroom, and they’ve learned almost all the letters and numbers, too (a very happy side-effect!).

The whole ordeal has been nearly three months of craziness. I’m sure we’ll never know what exactly caused them to love baths one day and hate them the next. But we are finally on the other side of that very dark chasm, and I thank you so much for your part in it.

It was a huge help to get responses from you with ideas.

If it takes a village to raise a child, I think it takes a metropolis to raise twins. Thanks again for joining the battle with us!

Amanda Dickinson
Via e-mail

Editor's note: Hooray for you and your kiddos! These "phases" are horrendous, aren't they? But life's breezes feel so fresh when you've weathered the storms! So glad we were able to help.

Oh, nuts!

I have identical 2-year-old twin girls, Abby and Paige, both of whom have a severe peanut allergy. They were diagnosed about a year ago, at 13 months of age.

Food allergies have become so prevalent in our society. I am interested in finding out about families with multiples who have allergies. Are there identical twins where only one twin has the allergy? How do other families deal with avoiding the offending foods?

Raising twins is challenging and very rewarding. Dealing with food allergies can be scary and intimidating. I would be happy to share our story with your magazine in order to help families with multiples deal with food allergies.

Colleen Siener
Via e-mail

Editor's note: We're following up on this, and will have a full-blown story on the subject in a future issue. Write to me if your twins have food allergies—twins.editor@businessword.com—put ALLERGIES in the subject line.

Twins with autism: Anybody out there?

I am a mother of identical twin boys 3 years old in September. One of my boys seemed to be displaying developmental delays, which prompted me to have him evaluated for autism. Because there is another sibling close in age, specialists suggested we have both children tested.

I was hoping to get more information on twins with similar circumstances, or get in touch with other MOMs who are going through, or have been through, this. It has been very challenging, emotional, and stressful. I was hoping for some support. Please let me know of any information you may have. I would greatly appreciate it!

Khalilah A. Tolbert
ktolbert_taxservices@yahoo.com
(313) 605-8224
Via e-mail

Editor's note: I directed Khalilah to the Jan./Feb., 2006 issue, which contained a major article on twins and autism. And I suggested she post her question and express her interest in finding other parents in the same situation in the Toddler Twins Forum on the TWINS Message Board online at www.TwinsMagazine.com. Anyone else out there who can offer support, call or write Khalilah.

Discount on shoes for twins

Thank you for a great magazine and e-newsletter. One thing to

mention. There is a shoe company called Preschoolians (www.preschoolians.com). They make great kids' shoes and always offer a 40% discount for twins. You might want to check them out!

Stephanie Ashley
Cos Cob, Conn.
Via e-mail

Editor's note: Thanks, Stephanie! I checked it out. Families with multiples need to send an e-mail with a picture of the twins or triplets to Info@preschoolians.com. Preschoolians e-mails them back a code that will reduce the price of their order by 40%. The shoes must be purchased in multiples of two (2, 4, 6 etc.) for twins, and multiples of three for triplets. If parents intend to buy more than 2-3 pairs, they have to let Preschoolians know that in their initial e-mail. These are great-looking "barefoot"-style flexible shoes for crawlers/toddlers on up. They appear to be quite "kid-proof" as well—elastic laces that make it tough for little ones to pull their shoes off (which we all know can occur every 30 seconds with tie-laces!).

2 x 2 = Shock!

We have two sets of fraternal twin boys ages 6 and 2 (no fertility drugs). The most common question we get is, "Wow—two sets of twins! What are the odds of that happening?" To which our reply is, "High enough we're not going to do it again!"

All joking aside, our boys are a blessing. We are thankful to have had only one NICU experience. But the physical toll on my body was more than I could handle again.

Just curious what the odds really are of having more than one set of twins, and how many families there are who have multiple multiples. Any input would be interesting.

Twincereely,
Crystal Huss
Via e-mail

Editor's note: Our expert on twinning, Gary Steinman, MD, PhD, will address this question in one of his upcoming columns. We've had literally dozens—if not hundreds—of stories over the years about families that have two or more sets of multiples. We know there are LOTS of them! But we seriously doubt whether we can come up with a credible number of families that have two or more sets of twins/triplets/more, since there's no reliable census data available. Any guesstimate we would make would be just that, a guesstimate.

Screaming mimies

Do you have any resource suggestions for disciplining toddlers? I have 18-month-old twins and I also have my 15-month-old nephew four days a week. They have begun hitting, pushing, and screaming. Everything I have read seems to me geared more toward a single child. Please help me!

Kim
Via e-mail

*Editor's note: As Michelle LaRowe, our "TWINS™ Nanny", says in her column in the Sept./Oct., 2006 issue, "Welcome to the world of sibling rivalry!" With twins, this rivalry and testing-of-limits is magnified. We publish a book called *The TwinShip Sourcebook 2—Toddler Twins*, that focuses on kids who are the age of your twins, and the issues inherent in*

being a parent of twins. We have a lot of advice about disciplining toddlers and dealing with rivalry issues, gleaned from past articles in TWINS™ Magazine, packaged in a TWINS Special Report called “Discipline Without Raising Your Voice”, \$8.95.

Hitting, pushing and screaming is very typical, and indeed normal, at their age. I hate to tell you “It’s a phase, and it will end”, because that doesn’t make life any easier for you right now, but it’s true. Your understanding of what’s happening, though, is essential, as is learning to deal with these bad behaviors and kiddie-aggression, without screaming back at them. Letting them trigger your inappropriate response only makes things worse.

The founder of TWINS Magazine, Barbara Unell, wrote a really excellent book, “Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking,” which costs \$8.

All three books are available at www.TwinsMagazine.com, click on Twins Bookshelf. Or they can be ordered by calling 888-55-TWINS (888-558-9467) and placing your order with our customer service representative, Sonya.

Last but not least, I’ve forwarded your e-mail to our “TWINS Nanny” and she may deal with your question in an upcoming column in TWINS™ Magazine. Stay tuned.

Airlines: Consistently inconsistent; and... Trilingual twins are thriving

I am a happy subscriber to Twins Magazine and I was particularly interested in two of the letters in your July/August issue, so much so that I felt the need to offer my comments.

Re the letter entitled “Know Your Airline’s Rules”: My husband and I have boy/girl twins now 24 months old. We were living in the Cayman Islands when they were born, in August, 2004. When they were just 19 days old, and with Hurricane Ivan threatening, we evacuated and flew to Tampa, Florida. While my husband and I are well-seasoned travelers, this was our first experience traveling with such young children. We had Baby Bjorn carriers and each “wore” one twin as we boarded our flight. We too chose to have them travel as “lap children”. It was only (after) we were on the plane that the air hostess informed us we were unable to sit together, as it was the policy of the airline not to allow more than one infant to travel in the same row.

After much juggling, my husband and I were seated in separate rows and off we went. The remainder of that flight was relatively uneventful. What we did not know at the time, was that this was but the first of many flights during the coming weeks: the Caymans were badly damaged by Hurricane Ivan and it would be six weeks before we were able to return home. Over the next six weeks we drove from Tampa to Miami, flew from Miami to Curacao, Netherlands Antilles; then Curacao to Kingston, Jamaica, to secure U.S. visas for the twins before flying on to NYC; and finally from NYC via Miami back to the Cayman Islands. We used the same airline for all flights and quickly learned the “rules” of flying with infant twins, or so we thought.

As we prepared to board each flight, following procedures from the previous flight in order to speed the boarding process, we were always dismayed to discover that the “rules” were different. This

meant it always took longer than necessary to board. Security in the airports was another constantly changing problem. Our Baby Bjorn carriers were indispensable to us during our travels—sometimes we were allowed to wear the twins to walk through security checks, other times not. Sometimes TSA security screeners willingly helped us juggle the twins and carry-on luggage (always more than you think when traveling with infant twins), and other times TSA staff were “not allowed” to help. Sometimes we sat in the same row on the plane, and even the same side of the aisle, provided the 3rd seat was empty—there are only four oxygen masks for every three seats, so five people in three seats is never allowed. Sometimes we were not allowed in the same row, even separated by the center aisle. Sometimes we were allowed to wear the babies in their Bjorn carriers during flight; other times this was disallowed.

We have flown with our twins (and now their younger brother) many times since the Hurricane Ivan evacuation. Each time we struggle with the inconsistency of airline rules. When traveling cross-Atlantic, we have requested bulkhead seats when making reservations, only to find when checking in this is not guaranteed until boarding the flight. The staff on a particular cross-Atlantic flight never once asked if we needed any help or anything at all.

Thank goodness we have always been well-prepared when flying, and our twins champion sleepers on flights taken. It is always so awful to receive angry looks of fellow passengers when boarding the flight as they are so sure the babies will cry non-stop. And it is even more rewarding to have the same people make kind comments at the end of the flight about how good the babies were; if they heard the babies at all, it was laughter.

We have been in airports and assured by check-in staff that we would be allowed to take the twins in their stroller all the way to the door of the plane, only to be told by the gate staff (all too often, unnecessarily rudely) upon boarding that the stroller will be taken from us in the departure lounge. So essentially, (we get the message to) just deal with twins, carry-on luggage containing diapers, diapers and more diapers, formula, bottles, water, food, change of clothes, burp cloths, blankets and other necessary baby paraphernalia, and car seats that will go in seats paid-for by us for our children.

Juggling two babies, two car seats, diaper bags etc. is a difficult task for two parents, not helped by unfriendly and unhelpful airline staff. In addition, it seems to be the norm these days among U.S. carriers not to allow pre-boarding for those with young children/infants, as apparently pre-boarding holds the entire boarding process up too much. We believe this is nonsense—my husband and I end up blocking the aisles for other passengers when trying to install car seats, hold babies etc. with no help from airline staff.

Once the twins became too big for the Baby Bjorn carrier and began traveling in car seats, we sometimes had to leave a car seat in the departure lounge, get on the plane with both babies and install the first car seat, then my husband gets off the plane to retrieve the other seat. This always results in pandemonium, since no one is supposed to exit the plane once they’ve boarded, blah, blah, blah.

But no one wants to help, etc., etc., so we are usually left with little choice but to do it this way.

We are certainly happy to abide by rules, but they must be reasonable. After all, airlines are in the business of serving their paying passengers. Making life impossible for those traveling with young children seems wrong and unnecessary.

For many years we were loyal travelers of American Airlines. Since having, and often traveling with, our children we have been truly appalled at the lack of customer service offered by American, and downright rudeness of their staff in too many airports and on too many flights. They treat us more as inconveniences than as paying passengers trying hard to cooperate with their rules in these crazy post-9/11 days. It would make life so much easier for everyone if both airport security rules regarding traveling with infants and individual airline rules regarding traveling with children were consistent, so parents would always know what was required of them.

On a more positive note, we have had the most exceptional service from everyone associated with British Airways for both cross-Atlantic flights and short-haul European flights.

Since having our third child, a little boy now 8 months old, we have moved from the Cayman Islands to Luxembourg (transferred by my husband's company). At the time of the move, our twins were 18 months and our youngest 2 months. Traveling with three children under the age of 2, we had to recruit someone to fly with us (my mother happily came along), as the airline we traveled on (and possibly many more are like this) require each child under the age of 2 to travel with one adult.

When it comes to flying with infants under the age of 2, no matter how perfectly prepared you are, there is always something!

And now, trilingualism...

The other topic in the July/August issue of particular interest was raising bilingual twins. My husband speaks Dutch to our children and I speak English. Now that we are living in Luxembourg, our twins attend a local Montessori school, which is French-speaking. They are thriving! It is our understanding that raising bilingual—or trilingual—children, they will indeed most likely not speak until later than “normal”.

At 24 months, our twins have no problems understanding what we say, and no problems understanding what the staff at school say. They are beginning to speak a few words each, although by no means are they stringing together short sentences. But this will come in good time. It is so perfect to “teach” children more than one language at this young stage in their lives, because their minds are so absorbent. The learning is not as we experienced it in school, but part of their everyday, exciting, lives.

All young children should be exposed to languages long before high school. While we are not at all concerned with them speaking “later than normal” we would be most interested in reading (another) article that truly addresses this more and more common situation. Finding much on this topic is challenging at best.

We very much enjoy receiving and reading your magazine, and are quite closely following the many articles about keeping twins together in school. We will soon start looking into primary schools for our twins here in Luxembourg, and are very much hoping for a more open-minded approach to twins in school.

It breaks my heart when reading of the struggles so many parents of twins have with schools. It seems so totally unnecessary to me for this type of “fighting” to be happening, and so sad that school boards would rather follow antiquated rules based on nothing than follow parents’ wishes—parents who know what is in the best interest of their twins.

Just as I do not think there should be a rule that says “split twins up,” I do not think there should be a rule that says “keep them together.” Whether twins are split or kept together should be a decision made on a case-by-case basis, with the parents and school having a genuine discussion. The decision should be revisited if or when the need arises.

It may be that in some situations twins initially kept together may one day benefit from being separated, and vice versa. Across-the-board rules for children are so often a bad idea!

Keep up the great work!

Erika van Dam
Via e-mail

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Donald E.L. Johnson, Publisher,
September 26, 2006

Twin temperament & attachment being studied

Diane M. Cates, a PhD candidate at George Washington University, Washington, DC, plans to explore whether a parent's view of a child's temperament affects the attachment relationship between the parent and the child. Cates will study twins between the ages of 3 and 5 and their relationships with their parents in her research. She wants to determine if parents of twins are more or less attached to each of their twin children (the "bonding" process) based on how they perceive their twin children's temperaments at the time they fill out the survey form.

Cates needs to sign up 300 sets of parents with twins age 3 to 5, nationwide, between Nov. 1, 2006, and Feb. 1, 2007. She needs families in which the parents are biological parents of twins, and in which both mothers and fathers reside at home with their twins, for her study. Mothers and fathers will be needed for the study. Parents will be asked to complete two separate questionnaires taking about 10 minutes each. Cates expects to finalize her research in late spring, 2007. TWINS™ Magazine will carry a news story about this study and its findings as time goes on.

To participate in this study, e-mail family particulars (name, address, age of twins, contact information) to dcates@gwu.edu.

Twin school-placement study still needs more families to participate

Jennifer Geinger, PhD candidate at the University of Denver,

continues to need more families with twins currently enrolled in kindergarten through 3rd grade, for her groundbreaking research study on the effects of school placement on twins. Geinger is herself the mother of twins, 3. Geinger expects her study will provide significant statistics and anecdotal information about how twins view their early elementary school experiences. Reliable data on this subject has been unavailable, especially if schools force twins to be in separate classrooms.

Geinger's study will examine twin experiences and perceptions with mandatory separations in school, voluntary separations, and twins together in the same classroom in early grades. Geinger's study requires that 500 families across the U.S. participate.

Sign up to participate in this important study by e-mailing dutwinstudy@yahoo.com.

Federal twins law awaits state actions

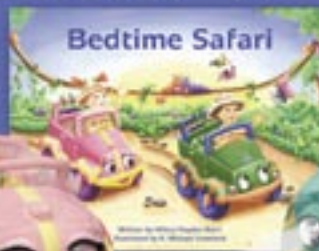
Since the first so-called "twins law" was passed in Minnesota, spring, 2005, parents of multiples across the country have sprung into action, seeking similar laws in their states.

All of the proposed bills are similar to Minnesota's, giving parents of multiples the primary voice in classroom placement of their children. Parents nationwide seek to ensure flexibility, rather than allow school districts to mandate automatic separation of multiples, which many do.

Kathy Dolan, campaign director for TwinsLegislation.com,

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(www.twinslegislation.com) which provides a website and clearinghouse for parents of multiples seeking legislation similar in their states similar to Minnesota's, said there are currently 13 states in which moms of multiples have begun the petition process they hope will lead to passage of twins-in-school laws. They include New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Georgia, Virginia and Massachusetts. In each state an elected official has already been enlisted to act as "legislative sponsor" for a bill during their upcoming legislative sessions.

Additional states that have launched petition drives started as the first step in obtaining legislative sponsorship include New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, California, New Hampshire, Florida and North Carolina.

Oklahoma already has on its statutes a resolution that recommends school districts take into account parents' requests for placement of twins. Illinois recently passed a similar resolution that contains a recommendation, but does not have the force of law.

Families in South Carolina, Missouri and Ohio have considered taking action, though nothing is formal yet.

And, Dolan says, parents in more states are coming aboard all the time. "This whole thing has really snowballed," she said. "I'm getting hundreds of e-mails each month—support stories and horror stories from parents across the country."

Dennis Frederickson, the Minnesota state senator who championed the "Minnesota Twins" bill, is helping seek sponsorship for a federal bill in Congress on this issue.

Wendy Haavisto, assistant to Minn. senator Frederickson, said talks with U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman's office have taken place concerning federal-level sponsorship.

But, federal efforts are likely to have to wait until more states enact laws on a local level. "If all states that currently have sponsorship and petitions get (laws) through, I think we'd have a good shot at getting something going on a national level," Haavisto said.

Every parent of multiples has a choice to make, said Dolan, who wants to see more parents in more states take action on this issue during 2007. She'd like to see petitions started in at least a dozen more states, as well as a greater groundswell of support for current legislation.

AmyJo Lennartson, freelance writer and mom of twin boys, 3, lives with her family in Eagle Lake, Minn. and prepared most of this roundup.

We all think alike!

Five families who had been in a multiples prenatal class together held a reunion in Auckland, New Zealand, at a local park. Each dad pulled exactly the same kind of stroller out of the car trunk ("the boot") when they arrived at the park for the party—the Mountain Buggy Double. It was worth a picture, said Ian McCallum, when he e-mailed this to Alan Jurysta, president of Sycamore Kids Inc., Fort Collins, Colo., maker and seller of the Mountain Buggy.



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“What do you do?”

by Rachel Bondi

It never occurred to me my career would be “housewife.” My single mother raised three of us while working the entire time. Being the youngest, I never saw she had taken time off for pregnancy, birth or infant care. She is now 63 and still works full-time.

When people ask me, “What do you do?” I wonder what they are really asking? Is it: “How can the career you have help me out at some point?” When you answer that you are a homemaker, working people figure you can’t do anything for them, so they don’t need to get to know you.

Even if you’ve had a 10- or 15-year well-paid career, the assumption is that you are no longer connected or credible. You’ve dropped out, and there’s no telling if you’ll return. Working people presume you’re useless, or worse, you’ve betrayed them by not staying in a position of power that they could benefit from.

Staying home is incredibly isolating when it occurs immediately after leaving the workforce. Those who haven’t been working full-time often don’t have any common ground to invite you into whatever it is they are doing at home all day.

What other house-bound women do all day is still a mystery to me. Are they napping? Are they feeding, changing and bathing kids? Are they writing a novel? Are they perpetually bending over and picking things off the floor for hours daily—laundry, food, dropped toys?

A few hours each day I see these stay-at-home-moms when I’m out and about. Like me they must gather groceries, shuttle back and forth to school, run errands to the post office. What do we have in common intellectually? Are they on a quest for food, friends and their figures? What energy do we have left to expend on each other?

To end my feeling of isolation after having twins, I tried reaching out by joining the local moms of twins group, which has meetings every month when we are asked to leave our kids with someone, presumably

to get to know each other better. Ironically, I find the one possibility for a common bond I might have with these women would be my children, and I’ve had to leave my new identity with a babysitter.

One of the biggest things I needed from the group was help finding adequate childcare. My initial effort to “join” this group flopped. Seven months later, I tried again. This time, an e-mail came from one of the moms to the e-group. She was planning to run the Danskin triathlon, and wanted to know if anyone else planning to do the race wanted to train together. I thought this would kill two birds with one stone: losing post-pregnancy weight and finding friends.

But, this was a really big step for me to take. Although I never hesitated when closing multimillion-dollar deals in the U.S. and overseas when I was working in business, I have a terrible fear of physical activity. There are few things I dread more than exercise. Asking me to go to a gym, especially to be around others, is something I never picture myself doing.

Unforeseen hurdles

I had recently stopped breastfeeding, and I heard that having a goal, like a triathlon date, was the best way to “stay serious” about working out. I wanted to lose the weight and find friendship with other moms of twins, so I thought having a buddy would help ensure my success. Besides, this woman reassured me it was an “easy” triathlon. For three weeks I tried in vain to connect with her to train. No luck. Then I was ill for a week, my daughter was ill for a week, and my other kids caught the bug from her and another week sped past.

This woman’s other triathlon friends rescheduled their training sessions for a time I couldn’t make. I’d reschedule only to be foiled by something due for my older daughter’s school that morning. I’d make arrangements again, but on the appointed day my husband needed me



during that exact time for work or signing documents.

Finally, triathlon day arrived. With no coaching and no training, I showed up in a bathing suit at the edge of a lake with hundreds of other women, many of them cancer survivors, all better prepared (equipment, wetsuits, etc.) than I. Friends were cheering them on, sharing camaraderie.

I spot the other mom of twins. She smiles and waves. The race starts. I plunge into the lake with the first group. As the freezing water hits my face, I see everyone pass me by. The next wave of women leaves the shore five minutes later, and passes me in minutes. A third wave takes off. Each new color of swim cap that passes signals I am way out of my league. I finish more than 25 minutes later, completely numb. Only two more stages to go.

I’d like to say biking went better, but pedaling twice around the reservoir on the family Schwinn was pretty tough. Still wet, I pedaled to the right, hugging the curves as dust enshrouded me from riders whizzing past. The announcer called names from the finish line in the center of the park as I rode by. Others had already completed the bike portion of the race, and also the footrace, before I reached the halfway point of biking. My self-esteem plummeted.

I watched a woman with one arm speed past me. “The one-armed woman is physically better than me,” my head echoed. “It’s not so bad,” I encouraged myself. A few minutes later, the wind from a one-legged woman completely waxed me as she zoomed by on her 10-speed. “Uh, one leg!” I thought, almost defeated.

After completing one lap the thought of

“I’d like to say biking went better, but pedaling twice around the reservoir on the family Schwinn was pretty tough.”

a second was overwhelming. No one was passing out those cups of water you see on TV marathons, and at this point I was dizzily parched. Tears welled up as I thought, “Am I this desperate for companions? There they go, toward the finish line.”

The coach of the cancer-recovery group saw me waver, and pulled up alongside me, handing me her bottle of water. “Why didn’t you bring a water bottle?” she asked. “No one told me,” I wheezed. She checked in with me twice more before I finally finished the bike segment and parked my Schwinn.

I began the run. Pushing forward, I tried to run but didn’t last long. I slowed to a brisk walk. Women twice my size, with apparently twice the fortitude, passed me by. A few said, “You’re almost there.” Five more minutes uphill, “You’re almost there.” Ten more minutes, “You’re doing great, you’re almost there.” I reached the top, “Just a little more, down to the cones,” a fellow

racer encouraged. For another five full minutes, there wasn’t a cone in sight.

I stopped and stretched. Physical pain was stronger than my mental anguish. “Why am I doing this?” I wondered, slowly rounding a set of cones, to head up another hill and down the other side.

I’m bringing up the rear now

Finally, someone handed me a cup of water. I slowed again because I couldn’t swallow. Just then someone came up from behind, but not to pass me. My husband had been watching the whole time. He took my hand and stayed with me to the finish line.

A half-mile swim, a 13-mile bike race and over three miles of running. Only two women in my age group fared worse. The three of us never met to commiserate.

A week later, I looked at the race results online: I came in 471 out of 503 participants. And, what’s more, that very morning my pregnancy test came back positive. Omigosh!

The week I had stopped breastfeeding was the window my body needed for me to decide it was time for my fourth child.

I wish I’d known that before I tried to do my first triathlon!

Looking back, I could say my new son got an interesting ride that day from his mom. Overachiever that I’ve been in the past, I’m not trying so hard to make friends anymore. I’m a triathlete now, with a medal hanging from my car mirror. And when someone asks, “What do you do?” I’ve decided they should talk to my family. If they really want to get to know me, it’s their turn to make the effort. ♡

Rachel Bondi, Dana Point, Calif., has a daughter 12, twin daughters, 2, and a son, 9 months. She’s a “buddy” for a prospective twins club member now, but says it’s rough making new friends in the world of SAHMs. She’s the founder of Earning Power, and consults with CitiPacific Mortgage, and Swiftlead Software. www.earningpower.org.

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After Christine Bradley did an article for us on breastfeeding twin infants, we heard from some moms who had questions:

Q How many “wet and poopy diapers” should a breastfed baby be producing a day, just as a rule of thumb?

A By the fourth day after they are born, an average breastfed baby should have at least four wet diapers a day. It is important to check that the urine is clear yellow and not dark amber-colored—dark concentrated urine indicates dehydration. After your babies’ first sticky, black meconium stools transition into seedy mustard-colored stools, they should have at least two or three poopy diapers a day.

After the first month or two, this may decrease to one poopy diaper a day or even one every three to four days. You will find that your babies have patterns that are unique to them.

Q What kind(s) of breastpumps do you think are best?

A Moms who are nursing multiples really should use a double pump—that is, a pump that expresses from both breasts at the same time. This will cut pumping time in half as well as increase the mother’s levels of prolactin, a hormone that regulates her milk production. I highly recommend the Medela Pump-In-Style. It is very portable, quiet, and efficient, and has flexible settings that let you pump at the speed and intensity that works for you.

Q Does the herb fenugreek really work to increase milk production? Is it okay for babies, since it probably passes to them in the breastmilk? Any guidelines on how much fenugreek to take, and how often? Is there any risk of taking too much? Are there any side effects?

A There have not been well-controlled studies up to this point that indicate exactly how effective fenugreek is. However, many women have found that fenugreek works for them. Fenugreek capsules are the best way to regulate doses. Three capsules taken three times a day is the recommended dose for increased breastmilk production. It usually takes 24 to 72 hours to see an increase in milk supply using this dosage. Fenugreek is listed as a GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe herbal supplement) and there have been no negative effects on babies. Side effects are said to include increased perspiration, some intestinal gas, and a strong maple syrup smell in the mother’s urine. Fenugreek was originally used in many countries to remedy diabetes because of its effect of stabilizing blood sugar. However, since the degree to which it lowers blood sugar is not well studied, diabetic moms should not take fenugreek. Fenugreek should not be taken while pregnant because there have been some reports that it may cause uterine contractions.

Q Since moms of twins and triplets almost never get enough sleep for the first six months, they’re always afraid they won’t be able to produce enough milk. It sounds like an oxymoron to say to a twins mom, “Relax, honey, so your milk will increase and flow.” This seems like a bad

joke. What do you say to moms of twins and triplets who want to breastfeed but who are really worried about their milk supply?

A The good news is that I have found mothers of multiples who breastfeed are usually less tired than those who formula feed. Yes, I said they’re actually less tired! They can feed both babies at the same time and they aren’t up in the middle of the night preparing and cleaning bottles. The La Leche League recommends using a side-lying position while nursing multiples so that moms can sleep while feeding their babies. As exhausting as it is to care for newborn twin infants, sleep deprivation alone usually isn’t enough to have a big impact on milk supply. However, sleep deprivation combined with poor nutrition, inadequate fluid intake, infrequent feedings, or supplementation with formula can be problematic. ♡

Christine Bradley is a Certified Lactation Educator who lives in Holladay, Utah.

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Making connections

By Karen Cabai

Calmly smiling, “Yes, they are twins.”

Looking at matching pink outfits, “No, they are both girls.”

Sighing, “Well, neither one is the bossy one. They can’t talk yet.”

And so on, and so on. As a fellow parent of twins, I’m sure you can relate. I can’t leave the house without adding 10 or 20 minutes for the Question Brigade. If I’m in a hurry, I try to find out-of-the-way places to run my errands and I avoid eye contact at all costs.

My identical twin babies attract attention faster than freshman girls at an all-boys prep school. The parents in our local MOMs club share similar tales, which they acknowledge handling with varying degrees of aplomb.

The most common frustration is dealing with the unabashedly inane questions that pop out of people’s mouths. My favorite so far has been, “Are they both yours?” I try to stay pleasant when fending people off, but I’ve had to bite my tongue a time or two.

I have a leg up on my fellow parents of twins, being an identical twin myself. The flurry of questions doesn’t surprise me. I have countless childhood memories of people asking, “Which one are you?” and “Are you the bossy twin?”

Most of the time I wasn’t bothered by it, and I could usually find a witty comeback. I’ll admit, when a boy I had a crush on identified me as “the one with the chubby cheeks,” I was mortified. But those sorts of comments didn’t flare up often, and no, I did not go out with him.

Being a twin is just part of who I am, the same as having dark hair and fair skin. Growing up, I didn’t feel like an outsider or worry about the Equal Treatment of Siblings (except when it came to birthday presents.) I enjoyed the fact people were trying to understand something I took for granted.

When my twin girls were born, I was thrilled. Friends and family showered us with matching pink dresses and bow-laden shoes. Everywhere we went, people stopped to peek in the double stroller. My oldest

daughter became quite the social debutante. She reveled in her new status as The Oldest, and introduced her sisters to any and all passing bystanders. I found time to take the twins out alone so I could enjoy the inevitable amusing interrogations.

Don’t get me wrong, we didn’t go overboard and become a Family With TWINS! I don’t always dress them the same, I don’t rush back inside to change both girls’ outfits if one gets soiled, and I don’t count the number of kisses I give to each child to make sure they are even. But I do enjoy the twin factor because it draws something good to the surface.

Having twins, and being a twin, is unique. It’s a blessing. But most people have some sort of personal experience with twins. During any Q&A session lasting longer than two or three minutes, I’ll hear something like, “My cousin is a twin,” or “My mother thinks I’ll have twins,” or even just “I always hoped to have twins.” Grandmothers stop to tell me about their new grandbabies, or their friend’s sister’s cousin’s new babies, and show me pictures of their singletons or twins.

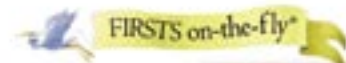
People are hungry for friendships, for support, for connections. And I walk around as a moving target when I carry my twins or am with my own twin. Most interactions are fleeting and trivial, and rightly so. But it’s nice to see people willing to open up a bit and say hello or compliment my girls. We get smiles and indulgent coos, and people hold the door open for us. Just like anyone, I get the occasional death-stare if one of my babies cries while in Target, but most of the time I get to see the good side of people.

If swallowing a stupid comment here or there is the price I have to pay for seeing a kinder side of life, then so be it. I can hold my tongue. ♡

Karen Cabai says most of what she reads in TWINS™ is by writers she’d enjoy chatting with over coffee, and was motivated to join their ranks to share her perspective. Her ID girls are now 13 months old.

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Myths Surrounding THE COMMON COLD

by Steven Sainsbury, M.D.

Jon and Matt, your 3-year-old twins, have just started day-care. They are excited to interact daily with a new group of playmates, and you welcome the brief respite for a few hours each day. However, within a week, the frosting comes off the cake, as both boys develop runny noses, slight fevers, sneezing and coughs—their first “colds.” You spring into action. First of all—No baths for the boys. Keep them bundled up and warm at all times. Everyone knows wet hair and the chill from bathing will only keep a child sicker longer. Second—Give some baby aspirin to each child for the fevers and fussiness. Third—Force-feed them. “Starve a fever, feed a cold.” Finally—Phone the pediatrician and get them on antibiotics. And don’t forget to fret—“Why do my children get colds in the first place? What am I doing wrong?”

Stop! Take a deep breath. If this scenario sounds familiar, you should probably re-think everything you thought you knew about the common cold. Here are some myth-dispelling facts.

Colds are called “common” for good reason. Children average 3-8 colds every year. (Adults average 2-4 episodes annually). That translates to over a billion colds in the United States every year. Don’t think that your child is sickly or suffering from an immune deficiency simply because he or she keeps coming down with a cold. Frequent colds in children is normal.

Causes of colds

Viruses cause colds—over 200 varieties have been identified as the chief culprits. Colds are NOT caused by cold weather, nor from going out into the cold with wet hair, nor from walking on cold pavement with bare feet. The real blame lies with your child’s playmates, as most children catch colds from other children. When a new strain is introduced into a day-care center or classroom, it travels quickly through most of the group.

Cures

There is no cure or sure-fire remedy for a common cold. Over-the-counter medicines like cough syrup, decongestants and antihistamines can sometimes help lessen symptoms, but they do not cure the cold or shorten the duration of the illness.

Treatment myths

Antibiotics—Antibiotics have no value against the common cold. Remember, most antibiotics fight bacteria and are not useful in combating the myriad viruses that cause a cold. By giving antibiotics unnecessarily, we run the risk of triggering adverse reactions and actually causing allergies, in addition to creating antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria, a real problem in our antibiotic age.

Some doctors may cave in to your pleadings, but using antibiotics for the common cold does not help and can do harm to your child.

Aspirin—No, no, no! A thousand times, No! Aspirin given to children with a viral illness can cause Reye’s Syndrome, a rare but potentially dangerous illness affecting the liver and brain. Acetaminophen is great to help reduce the symptoms of a fever or achiness, but never give aspirin (salicylates) to a child with a cold.

Diet—The old “feed a cold, starve a fever” adage is a myth. Sick children often have poor appetites, and forcing them to eat will not make them feel better or heal faster. However, to avoid becoming dehydrated, they should be urged to drink lots of fluids. Water is best. Any water-based drink will do, such as diluted juices, non-caffeinated sodas, Gatorade and other sports drinks, milk, and plain water. Egads! Milk? Doesn’t that cause more mucous and phlegm? Nope, it does not—milk is safe and healthy for children with colds.

Prevention

Can you do anything to reduce the number of colds your twins get? Yes.

- Choose a day-care setting with six or fewer children. This can significantly reduce their contact with cold germs.
- Wash your hands frequently and teach your twins to wash their hands, especially after contact with body secretions—for example, after diaper changes, sneezing, wiping their noses, and before and after eating.
- Avoid secondhand smoke. This is a big risk factor for increased numbers of colds.
- Breastfeed infants. Breastfed children get fewer colds and ear infections than their formula-fed counterparts.
- Yogurt and Zinc. The jury is still out on these. These two things—eating yogurt that contains healthy cultures, and supplementing with zinc lozenges, powder or tablets—may help reduce the number of colds by boosting a person’s immune system. Certainly, adding yogurt and a zinc supplement during cold season cannot do any harm.

Most colds start with a sore throat and progress to sneezing, congestion, nasal discharge, mild fevers and coughing. Symptoms are generally mild, and last for up to a week. If your children have severe symptoms (coughing all the time, shortness of breath and wheezing, vomiting, high fevers, rashes, or thick green mucous discharge), or anything else that concerns you—by all means, have them checked by your doctor. Otherwise, relax, and recognize that after every common cold infection, your twins will probably develop a helpful new immunity to one of the 200 known cold viruses. Not bad... only 199 to go! ♥

Steven Sainsbury, San Luis Obispo, Calif., is the father of eight in a blended family, including three surviving quads, 21. He’s been writing medical articles for TWINS since 1986, and has worked as an emergency physician since 1985.

Ask **the Twins Nanny!**

by Michelle LaRowe
Multiples-Nanny Specialist

Bedtime battles—and the path to victory

Mothers of twins ask me, about every three minutes, “What can I do?!?”....and they aren’t alone! Here are just a few of the desperate letters we’ve received at TWINS™ lately:

Q “Hello, my name is Nicole and I have 18-month-old identical twin boys, Kyle and Spencer. We live in Truckee, California. They have just figured out how to climb out of their cribs and will not stay in bed or go to sleep when put to bed. They climb out of their beds and play. My husband and I have had a difficult time trying to decide what to do next. We have tried staying in their room and putting them back into their cribs until they finally give up and fall asleep. They seem to think this is a game. We tried just letting them play it out, but they become more wound up instead of sleepier. Do you have any strategies or ideas?”

Q “My identical twin girls just turned 2, and they cry and scream and fight and whine almost every night at bedtime for nearly two hours before they fall asleep. It is driving me crazy! I am nearly at my breaking point because I also have a 5-month-old and it is hard enough getting him to sleep. Once the girls fall asleep, they usually stay asleep. I don’t understand why bedtime routine has to be so challenging. We put them down by 7:30 and usually they are still carrying on at 9:30 or 9:45 p.m. If we separate their cribs, even by a foot or so, it freaks them out—they cry until we put the cribs back together, touching. One night we put the cribs on opposite walls of the room and they cried just as long if not longer, as if they are together, and the next morning Madeline tried to move Mikayla’s crib back to the “right” side of the room. Any ideas?”

Caitlin

Q “I need help with my 7-month-old twins and am exhausted looking for answers in the Internet. Both of my singleton children were great sleepers from about 8 weeks; my twins, however, choose to cat-nap a few times during the day and do not sleep through the night. I breastfed them until 5 months and now give them bottles and baby food.

Doreen—AKA Sleepless in Alaska



Dylan and Ethan, 19 months, and father, Dan.

Nanny Michelle:

Step 1: Ratifying a routine
“Mommy, I need another hug!”
“Daddy I’m thirsty!”

Do these lyrics play in stereo from your bedtime brigade? Eliminate bedtime battles with a clear-cut, consistent evening routine. I’ve found that a successful toddler’s bedtime routine starts at dinnertime and goes something like this:

- 5 pm dinner
- 6 pm bath or shower
- 6:30 pm story or age-appropriate video
- 7 pm teeth brushing, with small cup of water (think smallest Dixie cup), and potty time
- 7:15 pm promptly, into bed, ending the day with an evening prayer (and mine, which is more like a mental cry of “God, please, pretty please, help them fall asleep in three minutes tonight! I’ll do anything!”).

As I kiss the angels goodnight, I remind them, “You may not get out of bed unless there is an emergency!” (... which I’ve clearly defined as a fire, a yell from mom, dad or me to get out of bed, or if they need to use the bathroom so badly that they’ll literally wet their pants!) “No exceptions!”

Once you’ve established these bedtime boundaries, your battle is half won. Being consistent and following through with your established regimen will lead to a complete victory over bedtime battles once and for all.

Step 2: Setting the scene

If you want your twins to form an association between their bedroom and their bedtime, reserve the bedroom for sleeping only. If their bedroom is their primary place of play, they will associate their room with activity and will expect to play whenever they enter.

To help your child form this association between her bedroom and bedtime, create a soothing environment, free from clutter. Keep toys and other distractions out of view; keep shades drawn and the room slightly cool at 68 degrees.

While it’s ideal to keep the twins’ bedroom fairly quiet, don’t keep the entire house quiet! The last thing you want is to have twin toddlers who will only sleep when there’s complete silence (especially if you’re blessed enough to have a singleton or two in



A multiples “must have”

If your twins are out of their beds constantly, and are all over the place at bedtime, but aren't yet ready to transition to their toddler beds, I have two words: Crib Tent. Made by a company called Tots

in Mind, I have received rave reviews about this product. I often recommend the Crib Tent to families with pets, especially cats. It keeps them out and the twins in. Tots in Mind also makes a model that goes onto the Pack 'N Play which is great at keeping bugs out if you use it outdoors or when visiting overnight in a non-childproofed environment.

The Crib Tent is a lightweight, mesh full crib enclosure, which is shaped like a dome and sits atop the crib with enough headroom for a child to stand. It fastens with Velcro to the crib rails and is fire retardant. The Crib Tent's large zippered panel provides easy access for getting children in and out. It's available at Babies R Us, amazon.com and most online baby stores for about \$60.

—Michelle LaRowe

Tips for keeping your twins' room safe...

- Consider moving your twins from cribs to beds when they reach 35 inches or become active climbers.
- Use a detachable rail to prevent falls from the new bed and/or put padding on the floor next to the bed.
- Use window guards to prevent windows from opening fully and tie up dangling blind/curtain cords so nothing hangs down.
- Keep furniture away from windows and secure heavy furniture (including all tables, stands and dressers) to walls using strong L-brackets.
- Use a gate at your twins' door.
- Use a secure, non-pressure type gate at the top of the stairs. Keep it closed at all times.

—Michelle LaRowe

Recommended reading on sleep training

- Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems, by Richard Ferber (infant/baby)
- The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Toddlers & Preschoolers, by Elizabeth Pantley (toddler/preschool)
- The Floppy Sleep Game Book: A Proven 4-Week Plan to Get Your Child to Sleep, by Patti Teel (preschool / elementary school)
- Slumber Safari, by Hillary Hayden Burri (toddler/preschool) — available from TWINS™ Magazine at www.twinsmagazine.com/safaritwinpak.html

addition to your twins). Be yourself. Resist the urge to tiptoe around the house while your twins are sleeping (unless, of course, you've already figured out and have the luxury of following the golden rule: When they nap, you nap!).

A white noise-maker is great for talkative twin toddlers—it drowns out their combative moans and groans while providing soothing sounds that often lull children to sleep. As we all know, once one twin falls asleep, the entertainment is gone and the other will join him in la-la-land in no time.

Step 3: Time to transition

The rule of thumb is this: When a child is 35 inches tall, or mobile and eager to climb, it's time to transition to a “big kid's” bed. There is no “right” age to transition, but for most kids it's between 1 and 3 years.

Regardless of the age you choose to make this transition, approach it with confidence and ease. Your twins will respond the same way. Have your twins participate in this transition by encouraging them to help pick out their new beds (if possible) or bed linens (a personalized pillowcase or one that allows a child to color a personal picture on it are great transitioning tools). Choose a bed low to the ground and purchase a side guardrail or two for safety.

Put each toddler's new bed in exactly the same location as his crib used to be. Don't be surprised if your twins find it soothing to continue to sleep with their old crib blankets in their new “big kid” beds. The old crib blankets may not cover the bed completely, but they certainly fill children's hearts with security as your twins adjust to this new, roomier sleep space.

Step 4: Dealing with disaster

However tempting it is to soothe your twins after they've hit the hay, if you're comfortable their physical needs have been met—they're fed, changed, clothed appropriately, and aren't sick or experiencing other unusual circumstances—the best thing you can do is let them learn to self-soothe. If your babies use pacifiers, be sure to put plenty in the crib—so you're not called to fetch those thrown overboard.

If crying turns to chaos, enter the room and make your presence known. Do not take either twin out of the crib. If you do, you'll be starting over from square one.

Believe it or not, a toddler won't climb out of his bed unless he thinks it's okay to do so. If your twins venture out of their beds, calmly but firmly get down to their level, look them squarely in the eyes and say, “Excuse me, we don't get out of bed during bedtime.” You may be surprised with the “deer in the headlights” stare you'll get as they turn around, one by one, and do the march of disappointment back to bed. If they don't go on their own, gently escort them back to their room, place them in their beds and say a quick goodnight.

If or when a struggle arises, don't argue, negotiate or bribe your twins. Your twins will amaze you with how quickly they live up to the expectations you set for them. If they know the rules, and you consistently follow through with enforcing them, your twins will

learn you mean business. Your toddlers will soon wave their white flag in surrender.

During naptime, when it's generally more difficult for toddler twins to fall asleep, separate them by having one nap in the Pack 'N Play in a different room. This works well—it eliminates the “egging each other on” that occurs when one is more wide-awake than the other.

Having the back-up bed is a good idea to nip their nightlife in the bud. Most twins like to sleep together, and in my experience, a few days of solitude by separation does the trick. Even if they aren't old enough to understand your language, chatty twins put in separate rooms won't be happy.

Their tears may be tormenting, but the lesson will be learned. When it's time for bed next, start them with a clean slate. Put them in the same room and again, if the activity continues for more than a few minutes, separate them. It takes only three or four times before they realize their behavior has a consequence. Your actions will convey the message: They can sleep together or apart, but sleep is non-negotiable.

Last but not least, if a monster resides in your twins' closet or under the beds, have your special monster spray handy. Custom-made for each child, wrap a lightly-fragranced aerosol air freshener in a brown paper bag, make a handmade label with the child's name and the purpose of her special spray—Jacquie's Monster Closet Cleaner. This will go a long way toward fending off any unwanted furry friends. One spritz before bedtime and that should be the end of it...until tomorrow night, of course. ♡

Michelle LaRowe lives on the East Coast with the fourth family in which she's helped care for twins. She is author of two books, *Nanny To the Rescue!*, and was named 2004 Nanny of the year by her peers.



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10 Tips for Writing A Christmas letter everyone loves

by Mary Parker Bernard



Koley and Skylar, 18 month

I have vivid memories of my mother's groaning when Christmas letters began to flood our mailbox just after Thanksgiving. She found them pretentious, impersonal and, mainly, boring.

For many years, I resisted writing a family Christmas letter. I didn't want to ruin someone's holiday by forcing a friend to trudge through the mundane events of my life. I had a horror of bragging about my family's accomplishments.

Still, far-off loved ones deserved to know what had been going on, particularly after I gave birth to twins. Friends loved our family and cared what was happening in our lives. Could I strike a pleasant balance? Could my letter be entertaining and heartfelt, yet humble?

The answer is yes. My first Bernard Family Christmas Letter, recounting our unique story, got rave reviews from all recipients.

You've got a story to tell, too, and you can produce a letter that will serve as a keepsake for years to come. Here's how:

SHOW, DON'T TELL.

Your high school English teacher's rules apply. Lists of what happened are plain boring. Instead of "I'm busy all day long. I stay at home with my twins and have a home-based business" try something on the order of "I get up at 5 a.m., do four loads of laundry every day, change two diapers every two hours, and log ten hours each week selling handmade jewelry on eBay." In other words, write specifics, using colorful and descriptive phrases and concrete verbs.

Ask yourself, if someone were to spend a typical day with you, what would he or she see? What strikes you as funny or unusual about your life? What are you doing that no one else is doing? How has your life changed now that you are parenting multiples?

SKIP THE ORDINARY.

Leave out things everyone else is probably doing, too. Most children who attend Mother's Day Out programs enjoy going. If your child were a Mother's Day Out dropout, or worse, to be kicked out, that's an

extraordinary story worth telling. I once heard of a child who refused to nap and was asked to leave Mother's Day Out, which would make a humorous tale that illustrates your child's stubbornness and Mom and Dad's frustration.

OMIT THE BRAGGING.

Lists of accomplishments are off-putting. Consider that your children are probably doing the same types of things other children their age are doing—making the honor roll, earning badges in scouting, and getting a Sunday school perfect attendance award. Reserve bragging rights for really special life events; say, acceptance to an Ivy League school or receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor. Self-deprecation can be really funny and usually resonates more.

INCLUDE PICTURES.

If one picture is worth a thousand words, then a picture of twins must be worth two thousand! Find interesting pictures that capture your kids' personalities or unique family situations. I included a picture of myself enormously pregnant as we left to deliver at the hospital. So many people on my list never saw me pregnant. Maybe you'll include a picture of your daughter with marker ink all over her face or your son unpotting a favorite houseplant. It's okay to include an adorable picture of your little ones looking cherubic in holiday clothes, too, because everyone loves those (if, of course, you can get the shot with two or more wiggly children, which is the topic of another article entirely).

BE CONVERSATIONAL.

Write anecdotally in a folksy, warm tone, as if you were telling your best friend about your year. Think of funny things your kids have said and include them as direct quotations. Keep a journal of cute things your kids do or say. A friend records cute kid-sayings on a piece of paper hanging on her fridge. She then stores them all in a notebook.

AVOID GIMMICKS.

Unless you're a clever, comedic writer for Saturday Night Live—or Steve Martin—stick

with a traditional letter format. Gimmicky Christmas letters can be as hard to decipher as haiku or cutesy newspaper headlines. They often come across as confusing and silly. Don't frustrate your reader or cause friends to think you're really moronic.

GET PERSONAL.

Use personal pronouns such as I, me, my and we. Write the letter from your own perspective, not your family's. Your friends will know you actually sat down and wrote a letter. One friend told me, "I love going to the mailbox at Christmas." Make copies, but sign each letter and scribble a personal note if you can.

PROOFREAD AND EDIT.

Run your computer's spell-checker and grammar-checker tools. Ask your spouse, kids, or a friend to read your letter and flag

any mistakes or garbles. Read it aloud to make sure it conveys your intended tone and message. Sleep on it.

PRINT IT.

Keep your printing understated. Choose paper with a simple border or small holiday icon. Choose a font that's easy to read. (Something close to what you see on this page is easiest for the human eye to follow.) Save scrolls and swirls for large headlines. Use a dark ink color—black or blue. Reading your letter should be easy. Your story should be your letter's focus, not the snowflake background.

KEEP IT.

Save your letter for your scrapbook. Busyness causes us to forget each year's highlights. Too soon the days blur together in our memories. Writing a Christmas letter once a year may be your best (and only)

opportunity to record the uniqueness of your life with twins. Take advantage of the occasion.

My foray into Christmas letter-writing was daunting, but I received a flood of compliments on my first attempt. My aunt said the letter made her laugh and cry. My neighbor said I should write a book. My friend said she was telling everyone my daughter's cute quotation. And my mother—the Christmas-letter hater—read it over and over and shared it with all her friends.

I am a devoted Christmas-letter writer. I'll never go back to signing our family's name on a store-bought card again. ♥

Mary Parker Bernard is married to Chris and is the mother of Susanna, 3, and twins Seth and Spencer, 1. She is a freelance writer and editor living in Nashville, Tenn.

Catherine and Benjamin, 8 months



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Same voice

Even when you have boy/girl fraternal twins, who have nothing more in common genetically than any other siblings, the first thing almost every person asks about them is, “Are they similar?” Mine couldn’t be more different, and it’s been that way since they were in the womb.

As early as their toddler years, Adrienne’s reflexive response to almost any question was “Yes.” Julian preferred “No” or, if he were in more of a wishy-washy mood, “Not yet.”

Adrienne teased people by making them chase her. Sometimes she hid behind a couch and burst into uncontrollable laughter when somebody peeked around the corner to find her. To torment her brother, she took his toys and threw them into some secluded location that neither of them could reach.

In her gymnastics and dance classes, Adrienne showed she was a perfectionist. If she couldn’t catch a ball or figure out how to crawl out of a cone-shaped contraption, she became upset and screamed for help. Julian took these situations less seriously. If he found himself trapped in the cone, he’d chuckle infectiously, roll onto his back and wait for somebody to remove him.

Julian was extremely earnest and opted for a straightforward approach to communication. He always laughed when other people surprised him. My husband, Alex, was the master of finding quirky behavior that tickled Julian’s funny bone. Sometimes Alex placed books on his own head during storytime or put an “o” after the “u” in the ABC’s song. Julian cackled with delight.

Because he hated transitions, Julian’s preference was to continue doing whatever he was doing indefinitely. The transition from bedtime to breakfast was tough for him. So was the transition from breakfast to preschool. He dreaded going into his classroom, but then he also couldn’t stand to leave school at the end of the session. He’d protest by going limp in the hallway on the way to the parking lot, much like a political protester being forcibly removed from a building.

Having to stop playtime to get ready for a bath was hell for Julian, as was getting out of the bath. Going from storytime to bedtime incited the most vehement rage and anger of the day. And each developmental stage—from bottles to cups and pull-ups to underwear—provoked passionate resistance.

Adrienne’s only two hours older than Julian, but she’s always



ILLUSTRATION BY CHUCK GALEY

enjoyed mothering him—rinsing his hair with water after shampoos, holding a sippy-cup to his mouth when he pretended he was a little baby, and waving a finger to scold him when he did something naughty. She helped him undress before bathtime, and took tremendous pleasure in demanding he say “Please” and ask nicely for toys.

Adrienne befriended strangers in supermarkets, parks, airports and playgrounds in about three minutes, but in relationships, she was fickle. Some people sensed that Adrienne’s affection was frivolous. With Julian, once you were in his inner circle, it took major events to dislodge his trust.

The differences extend to their physical characteristics as well. Adrienne has wavy brown hair and greenish-brown eyes, an impish smile, and pale skin that turns all pink and blotchy when she cries. Julian’s darker skin goes with his straight dark brown hair, sensuous lips, and dark brown eyes with half-inch, black lashes—the kind of eyelashes most girls would die for.

Despite myriad differences, Adrienne’s and Julian’s favorite game for many months was to pretend they were each other. Julian said he was Adie, and Adrienne said she was Jojo, and they giggled at their own silliness. Another favorite ritual was to chant, in unison, for the coveted object of the moment. Using voices that increased slowly in volume, they chanted, “Green chair! Green chair! Green chair! Green chair!”

The spookiest, most surreal aspect of these identity/language games occurred when the chanting began to slow down. They looked at each other, and simultaneously, as if they had a script in their hands and had been rehearsing for weeks, they said, “Saaaaaaaame voice.” They’d begin to smile, their dimples appearing, just one on each child, both on their left cheeks. At that moment, their twinship seemed so apparent, more like children who had actually shared the same womb.

This bizarre form of twin-dialogue is surely more common in twin households than in other sibling environments. And maybe Alex’s and my gene pool offered only a single set of dimples, and our twins had to share that one set. ♥

Lauren Kafka, mother of 8-year-old b/g twins, Julian and Adrienne, is becoming licensed to teach English as a second language in the public schools.

Speech delays in twins

Q Sunny Keller wrote to say she is concerned about possible speech delays in her boy/girl twins: “I have 2½-year-old twins, Christian and Alison, and they have speech delays. How often have you seen this in your experience as a nanny? My children say many words but do not make sentences. Alison is more advanced in language than Christian. We will be getting them help through early intervention here in Oregon. Because they have been making progress, I try not to worry. Alison is very hard to discipline and difficult to take out in public. She has a big temper if she does not get what she wants. Christian is more in his own world when playing with toys, but has made big strides in communicating with us and interacting. However, because Christian is not where he should be as far as interacting and speech, I worry. Do you have any advice or ideas?”

A Michele LaRowe, who’s been nanny to four families with twins, offers her advice: Speech delays are not uncommon in multiples. I have often found that a speech delay in an otherwise normally developing twin is the result of an older sibling (or dominant twin) in the home who does all the “talk-

ing” for him. Often the sibling or co-twin will respond to the speech-delayed child’s grunts, grumblings and gestures, making it possible for the silent twin to avoid learning to verbalize or communicate appropriately and ask for what he wants. His needs are easily met and things are presented merely only a growl or point of the finger. At times, a silent twin is “spoken for” by the other twin or by a sibling before he even has a chance to form the words with his lips.

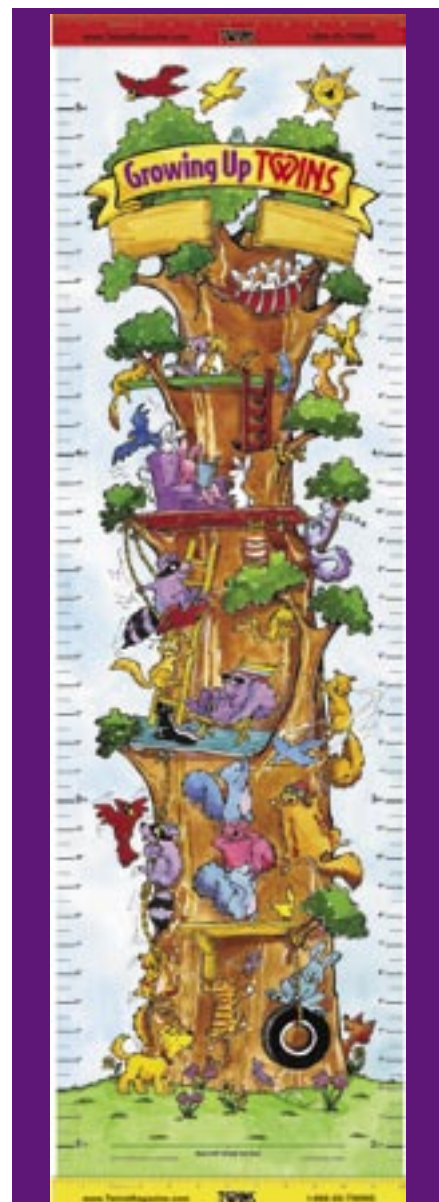
I’ve also seen twins who are so in tune with each other that they seem utterly content and appear to have no need to be verbal! Engaging your twins in conversation during play, and helping them participate in play groups with other children of the same age, will foster social interaction and speech development. Singing songs, playing music and repeating rhymes are great ways to naturally incorporate speech practice into your daily routine.

This is also a time when having your “mother’s instinct” can bite you in the butt. Don’t allow yourself to intuit your twins’ needs. Even though you already know what your twins are trying to express, encourage each one to ask for what she wants or needs by repeating back to you the phrases and correct pronunciations that you give.

When your twin daughter is motioning for you to hand her the cup of milk, for example, pick it up and ask her “Are you looking for your cup? Can you ask Mommy for your cup? ‘Cup please.’ ” Then praise her for her efforts. Communication modeling provides your twins with the words that they aren’t yet able to verbalize when they are trying to non-verbally communicate. ♡



Jackson and Payton, 2½ years with Dad, Jack.



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“Whose memory is it, anyway?”

By Jennifer S. Dahlen

Long before I became the mother of twins, I had a glimpse into their lives, because my mom is a twin. Throughout my childhood my mom, Sue, and her twin sister, Esther, took center stage at family gatherings, as they told stories about growing up. One story stood out from the rest, and always began with my mom or Esther blurting out, “Remember when we cut our toe?”

The story itself was simple: The barefoot country girls were exploring an abandoned building, when one of them caught her foot on an old piece of pipe, slicing the skin between her toes. Her sister ran to get help. The fascinating part is that both Sue and Esther claimed to be the one cut and bleeding. Both remembered the pain and the blood. Both remembered her sister running to get help. And both insisted she had a scar to prove it. But after shedding shoes and socks, neither could come up with a convincing scar, so the memory, like so many other things twins share, became both of theirs.

As if joined at the foot, Sue and Esther resolved their disagreement by sharing the injured toe.

The “disputed memories” phenomenon

As strange as this story may sound, the phenomenon of “disputed memories” between twins is actually quite common. According to a study by psychologists at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and the University at Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, “disputed memories are a relatively common occurrence among twins.” In their 2001 study, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin defined a “disputed memory” as “a memory in which

two people agree on most of the details of what happened, but disagree on (the person) to whom the event occurred.” Their study concluded that disputed memories “occur frequently among twins.”

Sandra Miller, an identical twin from Portland, Ore., echoes the study’s findings. She and her sister, Karen, have disagreed about many events over the years. Sandra recalls a skiing incident when she and her sister were young girls. “I was on the ski-lift and Karen was trying to climb on with me,” Sandra says. “Karen slipped and fell to the snow below. I remember Karen yelling, ‘Hang on! Don’t let go of me!’ but I couldn’t hang on. I know I was the one on the lift because I remember seeing Karen’s face looking up at me from the snow, and I remember feeling remorse later for failing to hang onto my sister.”

But Sandra says Karen remembers it the other way. “Karen says that she was sitting on the ski-lift and I was the one who fell.”

In their most recent study published in the journal, *Genes, Brain and Behavior* (2006), Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin sought to determine why some memories are disputed. Their findings showed when twins dispute a memory, “they claim for themselves memories for achievements and suffered misfortunes, but are more likely to give away memories of personal wrongdoing.” When twins do this, they have noticed, “claims to the ownership of memories are frequently self-serving.”

Disputed memories and the general population

Are disputed memories limited to twins? In their first study, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin included same-sex twins (both identical and



Rachel and Sarah, 3½ years

fraternal), siblings close in age, and same-sex friends. Although they occasionally reported disputed memories among the non-twin groups, this occurred much less often than with twins. Zygosity was not a factor in the number of disputed memories among the twins, and boy/girl twins were not part of the study.

These researchers offer three reasons why twins may be more likely to have disputed memories:

- Twins share a close upbringing
- Twins have a high degree of empathy with each other
- Twins are more likely to talk to each other about their shared past, thereby discovering disputed memories.

One implication of this study is to question whether or not many of us have memories we have stolen from others. The majority of disputed memories are from events occurring in late childhood, so it is possible that some of us have “stolen” a memory from someone in our past. But

the person we took it from is not around to correct us.

Can parents help twins resolve disputed memories?

Parents seemingly could offer information to help twins settle their conflicting memories. Unfortunately, in the case of my mom and her sister, they didn't discover the memory was disputed until after their parents died. Sandra Miller says, "Most of the disputes between Karen and me were too insignificant for our parents to remember, or our parents were not present at the time."

In an attempt to see if parents could help resolve memory disputes, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin asked parents of twins to name events that occurred to only one twin. Later, when they asked the twins about these events, only 2 of the 60 incidents were ever disputed by the twins. Interestingly, however, in 10 out of the 60 incidents, the twins agreed with each other about who was the central player, but disagreed with their parents!

The majority of disputed memories are from events occurring in late childhood, so it is possible that some of us have "stolen" a memory from someone in our past.

Good news about disputed memories

The good news ascertained by these studies is that usually "disputed memories are not of very important events." The researchers suspect it would be difficult to dispute memories of greater importance, such as who got straight A's in high school, or who broke their arm, because there would be corroborating evidence to support one side.

Sometimes I wonder which memories

my twin boys will debate. Will they both say they were the one who slept on the top bunk, because his brother was scared to do so? Will I remember? Will it matter?

Recently, I asked my mom how she felt about sharing memories with her twin sister. She said, "It doesn't bother me, because it doesn't really matter which one of us it was. If Esther wants to have the cut toe, that's fine with me!" ♥

Jennifer Dahlen is the mother of seven, including twin boys born in 1997. She resides with her husband and children in Portland, Ore.

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Megan and Jacob, 6 weeks

It's too early!

by Susan Carney

November is Prematurity Awareness Month

This story commemorates all those worrisome months parents of preemie multiples spent sweating over the lives and health of their babies, and we express the hope that we can help other expectant parents avoid premature births of their babies.

My water broke at 28 weeks, 5 days. It was a Wednesday. I was in my office at work, ordering wallpaper border online for the babies' room.

I was also in the homestretch: Friday was to be my last day of work, and then I would spend the remainder of my pregnancy lolling about at home, reading childrearing books, washing tiny clothes, thinking about baby names, watching my stomach grow.

I got panicky. I stood up. More fluid gushed out. I sat back down.

I had wondered what that moment would be like, when that balloon inside me burst, when I knew the babies were coming. Many times I had imagined calling my husband, Drew, and shouting joyfully into the phone, "Here they come!" or "They're ready!" or something along those lines.

I remember my hand shaking as I dialed the phone....the doctor's office...my husband...my parents...

And I remember, above all else, a little voice in my head repeating over and over, "It's too soon, it's too soon, it's too soon."

My pregnancy had been remarkably uneventful. No preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, or problems gaining weight. I was older (38) and had IVF, so I knew there were risks. We were monitored closely, the three of us, having our pictures taken each month. I watched those little black dots grow legs, arms, fingers and toes, counting and recounting all of them. Our ultrasounds were normal. My husband and I debated the risks of an amnio, and finally relented: Results normal. It seemed almost too good to be true. After three years of trying, here we were, pregnant with two healthy babies.

Maybe it was, indeed, too good to be true. Maybe I had pushed too hard, wanted too much.

I somehow survived the ride to the hospital without completely falling apart. My head was spinning—I still couldn't believe that my water had broken, here, now. Everything seemed to be in slow motion. A half an hour ago I had been sitting at my desk at work, trying to wrap things up before my leave started. Now I was lying here in L & D, hooked up to IVs and monitors, waiting

for someone to tell me that this was all a big mistake, that everything was fine, to go home and rest.

The NICU doc came in to talk to us about the prognoses for 28-weekers. I kept telling him we were almost at 29 weeks, thinking that would tip the scales in our favor. To him, that minor fact didn't change a thing. I wanted reassurance, but he laid the facts bare, giving us more information than my brain could process.

The only thing I heard and remembered were the phrases "95% chance of survival" and "50% chance of developmental problems". A 50% chance? For heaven's sake, that's basically one in two! And I was carrying two.

I felt simultaneously nauseated and removed, as if I was watching this happen to someone else. Grief and fear overwhelmed me. I kept saying to my husband, my parents, anyone who would listen, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

While reading at least a half-dozen books on twin pregnancy in preparation for my babies, I had never considered that I'd have

our babies prematurely. It never occurred to me. I knew it happened, but, like most things, never thought it would happen to us. Denial, stubbornness, or arrogance, I don't know which it was. I was confident I would make it to 35—maybe even 36—weeks. The section of the books that talked about the NICU got barely a glance. We hadn't even taken our hospital tour yet (it was scheduled, coincidentally, for the night my water broke).

I held onto my babies as long as I could, trying to will my body to keep them inside where they would be safe. But before a full day passed, they entered this world. Megan, the water-breaker, at 2 lbs. 13 oz., and Jacob, along for the ride, at 3 lbs. even.

The babies arrived March 31. Their due date was not until June 19.

I was strangely detached from their births, unable to feel or see anything. My husband gave me the play-by-play while I lay there, feeling uninvolved, unnecessary. Hollywood's version of childbirth, where the doctor pulls a fat, squirming, screamer out of the mother and immediately places the baby on her chest so they can start falling in love with each other, didn't happen in my world.

I didn't see them or even hear them cry for what seemed like an eternity. Isolated on the other side of a white drape, I kept asking over and over, "Are they okay? Are they okay?" Two teams worked on my babies, until I heard some faint cries, and then my children were whisked away in separate isolettes, with only a brief pause for my husband and me to look at them, to love them, with thick sheets of plastic between us.

In the recovery room, alone, I heard voices coming from the bed on the other side of the curtain. I tried to focus on the impossible task of moving my foot while another mother's family went on and on about "how big he is" and "how much he

looks like so-and-so." I wondered why they didn't have separate recovery rooms for people like me, to spare us other parents' and grandparents' joy.

It was surreal. I wasn't pregnant anymore, but neither could I feel like a real mom. No sign of babies anywhere, just paralyzed legs and a knot in my throat. In my room, I heard babies cry day and night. Bassinets were wheeled up and down the hallway. Everywhere there were people with flowers, balloons, stuffed animals—people who were happy, celebrating, confident.

I blamed myself. While I was pregnant with my babies, I knew I was supposed to be "taking it easy", but what did that mean,

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exactly? Instead of going slowly, I pushed myself, and now regretted it. There were so many tasks involved with preparing for one baby, let alone two: appointments to keep, books to read, classes to attend, a nursery to plan, furniture to select, the constant and futile search for clothes that would fit my changing body.

From swings to baby monitors, I thoroughly researched every item I selected for our registry. My nesting instinct went into overdrive. It was daunting. Whenever I thought I had everything ready, I remembered another task yet to do. I had been afraid to leave anything for after the babies came. Now my thoughts turned another direction. Perhaps my rush to prepare the perfect home for my babies had put them

in peril. I had asked my doctor several times when I should stop working. The response had always been vague.

Should I have stopped sooner, I wondered? Some days I felt wonderful and some days I felt like I couldn't take another step. What should I have left out, as I did my best to prepare for my family? Would it have made any difference at all?

Drew took pictures of the babies in the NICU and brought them for me to hang in my room. With all of the wires and tubes and tape, I could hardly see them. Alone in my room, I would look at them, helpless, feeling that I had failed them. The shame of my disappointment loomed large.

I hated to admit, I also felt cheated—of the last months of anticipation and excitement, of the chance to bond immediately, the four of us, alone. I was angry that instead of feeling joyful, grateful, I was left to worry and wait. This was not how it was supposed to be. The moment I had most looked forward to had been stolen from us. I longed for the rest of my pregnancy, despite its inevitable discomforts. Given another chance, I would do better.

And I felt guilty for feel-

ing all of that.

My babies' small size never failed to stun me. I felt badly for them, lying prone, hardly able to move for all of their wires and tubes. Confined to a wheelchair, I could only touch them with the tip of my finger. They would not be cuddled, or held, for some time. I wondered how they felt to be jarringly thrust into this world, too soon. Had they noticed? Were they in pain? I could hardly see their faces, so I focused on what was visible—a foot, the tip of a nose, a hand wrapped tightly around my finger.

My son's lung collapsed on his second day on earth. Until that moment, I had held it together. But when the doctor came to my room that morning and asked me to sign a consent for my son to have a chest

tube, I lost it. The doctor was very matter of fact, and didn't have a lot of time, for obvious reasons, to try to make me feel better. No one had arrived to visit me yet. I was alone in my room, in a panic. My son didn't even have a name yet, and he had a collapsed lung. Things were starting to unravel. I didn't know how I was going to get through this. I wasn't strong enough.

But I didn't have a choice. None of us did. We took each day, one at a time. We named our children Megan and Jacob, began the process of getting to know one another. Our families kept vigil with us, letting us borrow their strength. Prayers and good wishes came from the people in our lives, all of that energy directed at these two beautiful bundles that had to fight every day just to make it to the next one.

Some friends avoided us. Without knowing the right words to say, they said nothing. I felt betrayed by their failure to acknowledge that my babies were here, as if their imperfections made them unworthy of the usual fanfare that came with a new baby, the same fanfare that, to me, felt awkward and strange. Yes, I wanted to celebrate that they were here, just not yet.

The medical staff was very careful with their words, not willing to promise anything. A few of them showered us with an optimism that irritated me. How could they be so sure the babies would be all right? Did they know something that the doctors didn't know? Couldn't they realize that for me, the world had stopped spinning?

My mind was awl in a maelstrom of emotions. I needed people to realize that I was holding my breath with the hope that my children would grow up, go to school, have lives. I wanted everyone to understand that even though the babies were here, and alive, I was overcome with grief at not having experienced the "normal" birth that our family wanted and deserved. And I needed reassurance that I hadn't failed miserably at my first task as a mother, to bring healthy babies into the world.

In the beginning, I felt sure I would lose one or both of my babies. No one spoke of it, but it was there, lurking in the shadows of our minds. The social worker explained to us before my discharge that we might get a call, anytime, to come to the hospital immediately. She never said it, but I knew what that call would mean: "Come quickly, one of your children is dying." I imagined many times what that car ride would be like—the panic, the helplessness, the tears—hoping to get there in time, yet dreading what we would find when we arrived.

I tried to go to church, searching for something, but each time I left the house I cried uncontrollably at the sight of other children happy with their families. I knew that if we were to lose these babies this would become my world, looking in on the lives of others from

the outside, my heart broken for what I had lost. How could they be taken away from us when we had tried so long and so hard to get them here?

And then there was a dawning. At some point in the ordeal, I made a mental decision to view each day with Megan and Jacob as a precious gift, regardless of how many days we would be given. This helped me live in the moment, to enjoy each small triumph instead of leapfrogging over tiny advances to the anxiety of the next hurdle.

People asked me if it was hard to return home without them. A strange question. Yes, it was odd, after being pregnant for many months, to come home from the hospital each day alone, just my husband and me. Baby clothes and gear were piled high in the living room, mocking me with their potential uselessness. My babies, after growing inside of me for so long, were now an hour

away from us, hearing other people's voices first thing in the morning, feeling someone else's touches last thing at night. Guilt assaulted me for every moment I wasn't with them. Yet even when I was there, I felt superfluous—not the expert, not the one in charge.

I prayed for a miracle. Actually two. But I had already used up my miracle in getting pregnant. Maybe I had asked for too much. Someone remarked one day that God would not,

after all we had been through to get these babies, take them from us now. But I knew tragedies happened all the time.

We held the babies skin-to-skin, feeling their tiny heartbeats, holding their tiny hands. We carefully tracked their progress, rejoicing in each hurdle overcome, each ounce gained. We took hundreds of pictures. We learned to change their tiny diapers, take temperatures, and, when they were ready, brought tiny clothes to dress them.

There were no support groups. I longed to sit with other preemie moms, hearing their stories, sharing mine. There were moms everywhere in the NICU, but without a vehicle to introduce oneself, we largely focused on our own babies, passing each other by the coffee machine, in the breastfeeding room. Never much of a joiner, I found it hard to break the ice, afraid their babies were doing better than mine, afraid their prematurity was really not their fault, while my babies' prematurity was my fault...afraid their stories would make me feel worse, not better.

Our sense of isolation stemmed partially from the limitation on visitors in the NICU. Each baby had a list of six visitors, besides parents and grandparents, permitted into the NICU. During those seven torturous weeks, I longed to bring others to see them, to oooh and aah over them, to validate them, us. Instead, we felt locked in our own world, weeks stretching into months.

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Drew was an optimist. My mother believed it kept us going. But he was hard to talk to about how I felt, convinced as he was that everything would be all right.

Other babies, bigger babies, were born and discharged during our stay. Spring came and went as we watched our kids grow, ounce by ounce. I lived the NICU mantra: Two steps forward, one step back. Megan and Jacob had what one doctor termed “typical prematurity issues” that resolved over time, and as time went by, we started to breathe easier. It looked as if our babies were going to be okay after all.

I thought I would be happy when the doctors pronounced Megan and Jacob ready to come home. Instead, I panicked. “What if I can’t take care of them?” I cried to my husband on the way home from the hospital. For almost two months, the routine made me the visitor and others were responsible for my babies’ well-being, responsible for keeping their tiny bodies alive. Now all of a sudden I was expected to

take charge. How was I going to do this?

It was overwhelming, caring for two babies under five pounds each, hooked to apnea monitors because they might suddenly stop breathing. While the monitors gave me some measure of comfort, their bulk made me feel at times as if I had four babies. I wondered how I would sleep at night once they no longer had the monitors. I wondered how I would get through the next 12 months, as I checked off each milestone, ever vigilant for signs of developmental delay. My joy was crowded by anxiety.

The demands of caring for two tiny babies left me so drained I had little time to worry. In the beginning, we seemed to have doctor’s visits nearly every week. At first, I approached each anxiously. As time wore on and my babies’ health and development continued to improve, I learned to relax, to breathe, to love being a mom.

As Megan and Jacob approach the one year anniversary of their “due date”, they

are healthy and happy babies reaching all of their developmental milestones. Though they will continue to be monitored, doctors are extremely pleased with their progress. When we look back on pictures of them as newborns, it’s hard to believe they are the same babies.

Two miracles wasn’t too much to ask for, after all. ♥

Susan Carney lives in Gilbertsville, Penn., and recently wrote an article in TWINS™ about her son Jake’s plagiocephaly and his helmet treatment.

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TWIN TAKES

from the horse's mouth

■ by Jennifer Jordan

Parents Ask:

I've noticed that my twins tend to gang up on their other sibling. Why does this happen and is there anything that can be done to disarm the "two versus one" factor?

Jennifer's Take:

In the history of the world, people have always allied forces during times of battle and times of strife. Nearly every war is marked by different countries setting aside their differences to fight in unity. Twins and their siblings aren't immune to this way of thinking.

While twins don't always get along with each other—they certainly have their share of disagreements and fights—they will almost always unite to fight another sibling, who becomes known as the "common enemy."

For my twin and me there was no bigger adversary than our younger sister. Stepping beyond mere rivalry, we often waged a full-blown war; if our parents would have allowed heavy artillery in the house, chances are we would have used it.

Perhaps this was because she was our younger sister, and therefore was deemed "a pain in the butt" at birth. Or perhaps it was because my twin and I became a gang of two, adopting a mob mentality and feeding off each other. Whatever the reason, we made sure we always fought her in double coverage.

In hindsight I know this wasn't very fair, but at the time I simply allowed it by placing the blame on genetics. As a child, I blamed genetics for everything: It wasn't my fault I couldn't run as fast as my sib, it was genetics; It wasn't my fault my room wasn't clean, it was my sloppy DNA; It wasn't my fault my twin and I ganged up on our younger sister, it was our genes talking.

And, when our parents chastised us for convincing our younger sister of ridiculous

things—that Santa wasn't going to bring her any gifts, that she should cut off her hair, that a sheep actually gave birth to her—we retorted that it wasn't our fault we were twins; they had no one to blame but themselves!

As an adult, I know we probably shouldn't have ganged up on our little sister as much as we did. But, in truth, it was really hard for us, as twins, to not take each other's side. Twins are just born with a certain kinship between them. A lot of their ganging up on other siblings and outsiders isn't intentional. Twins often don't even realize they're doing it. Twins, upon conception, don't sit in the womb plotting and tactics, diagramming strategies on the walls of the uterus. For twins, it's simply so natural to unite. They are born as automatic allies.

However, for parents who might be dealing with similar circumstances, a few things can be done to defuse the situation of two against one. The best advice I can offer, though it may seem contradictory, is for parents to avoid siding with the child who is being picked on.

When my twin and I would pick on our younger sister, my mom would always interject and side with her. My mom's logic was sound—she reasoned that "two versus two" was fairer than "two versus one"—but it made the situation much worse. My twin and I began to resent that my mom always sided with our younger sister and, by default, we began to pick on her more. Though my mom was trying to help, it was like adding lighter fluid to a campfire.

Instead of directly siding with the single sibling, parents might try a more subtle approach, telling the twins they will be separated and not allowed to play together if they continue to gang up on others.

Threats like this usually worked on my twin and me. While we didn't stop ganging

up on our younger sister altogether, we did make the ganging-up much more subtle and tried to limit it to times when our parents weren't around. This eventually caused the ganging-up to decrease. Each time our parents separated us for ganging up on someone, the ganging-up became less and less appealing.

Make sure your twins are aware they are ganging up on another sibling. Twins might not perceive their behavior as "ganging up"—they might only view it as supporting each other. Sometimes the fact that two versus one isn't fair needs to be pointed out to twins. They need to be asked how they would feel if they were in the shoes of the odd-man-out who's being bullied or dominated.

Overall, keep in mind that this too shall pass. Twins might always demonstrate some kind of closeness, but they won't always unite forces. When you're a kid, being a twin is such a part of your identity that siding with someone who looks like you, talks like you, and shares your birthday is almost innate. But once twins find their individual selves, this won't occur as often.

As an adult, I ally myself with my twin only when I legitimately agree with her. There have been times after childhood when I joined forces with my twin, but there have also been many times when I joined forces with my younger sister in opposition to my twin sister. Then there have been times when I disagreed with both of them and took the side of the family dog, reasoning that he is being more rational and reasonable than either sibling. ♡

Jennifer Jordan, 28, is 20 minutes older than her identical twin and also has a younger sister. She is a copywriter at a graphic design firm in Denver and describes herself as "slightly obsessed" with the Denver Broncos and Grey's Anatomy on ABC.



It's Ra-Ra time...fun and games!

by Robin Wright

My best friend is the mother of eight children, the last two being twin girls, now 2½. (She actually miscarried a triplet.) And my daughter, Danielle, is an only child.

When my friend learned she was expecting twins, she was overwhelmed, to say the least. I realized a golden opportunity for my daughter, then 9, to experience siblings, if only for a day a month. She had never held a newborn, much less diapered, burped, or fed a baby.

I homeschool Danielle, and we now include in our studies a subject I've dubbed "Twins Apprenticeship." I have a long-standing pact with my friend that my daughter and I will take care of her children once a month to give her a full day every month to do fun things—hair appointments, lunch with hubby, shopping, etc. No grocery shopping or unpleasant errands, just fun stuff.

The twins call me Ra-Ra. They climb into my lap and whisper, "I want to go to your house, Ra-Ra." A few times they've stayed several nights with us while their parents traveled. They never cried for their mom, but recently asked me for the first time, "Where did Mommy go?" I answered with a smile, "Mommy is out having a fun day, just like us!"

Danielle and I have been faithful to our commitment for two-and-a-half years now. The babies, as well as my friend's other children, are very precious to us. Not only do we babysit, but we do school work, sometimes laundry, and other odd jobs. I cook a large dinner and wait for my husband and the children's parents to come home so we can all sit down and eat together.

We've documented our visits with lots of pictures, and have a special scrapbook recording our apprenticeship. ♡

Robin Wright, a photographer, operates Wright Farm Photography in Greenwell Springs, La., and is the kind of friend every mother of twins would love to have.

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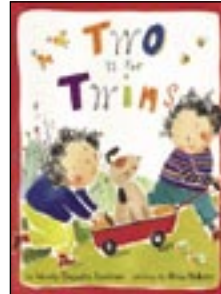
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by Elizabeth Lyons

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sample of 2-page spread

The Amazing Facts — Why there are so many more twins today!

Mothers of twins often ask: “What are the chances that I will have another set of multiples if I become pregnant again?”

This question has become more complicated in recent years, partly because of the introduction of artificial reproductive means (in vitro fertilization) in the mid-1970s. Since then, the rate of twinning has risen progressively into the new millennium.

In vitro fertilization leads to multiples in as many as 30% of cases. Attempts to reduce this frequency by limiting the number of transferred embryos to two have been only partially successful.

For numerous medical reasons, gestations of two or more babies are much more prone to complications (e.g., preterm labor, congenital anomalies, and gestational diabetes). To prevent such problems both for the mother and her babies, before and after delivery, the generally accepted approach these days is to keep the number of resulting fetuses to a minimum.

On the other hand, spontaneously conceived (natural) pregnancies are prone to twinning for any of several reasons: Family history, race, parity (that is, the number of a mother’s previous pregnancies), and maternal age at conception. And these pregnancies with multiples are also on the rise.

Recently, I published a research paper that reported the effect of diet on twinning frequency. In that report I speculated that part of the increase in spontaneous twinning may be due to the administration of growth hormones to cattle, but this remains to be confirmed.

According to Hellin’s Rule (formulated in 1895), spontaneous twins should occur once in every 89 births. Using the average numbers for large populations in current

databases, some statistics for twinning can be estimated. (For more details, see www.threebluestars.com/multiples.):

- In 2001, 3.1% of all births in the U.S. were twins (spontaneous and induced. NOTE: Induced twins include all pregnancies resulting from or incidental to the use of fertility-enhancing drugs and/or in vitro fertilization.). In Europe, the twinning rate was roughly half that. (Growth hormone treatment of cattle is banned in the European Union.)
- In the U.S., 1 in 50 people is a dizygotic (fraternal) twin and 1 in 150 is a monozygotic (identical) twin.

Although these numbers are prone to change in the future, they give a rough idea that certain women are more likely to have twins.

- If a woman has already had dizygotic (fraternal) twins, her chance of having another set spontaneously is 4 times higher (i.e., 1 in 3000 births for two sets).
- A woman who is a dizygotic (fraternal) twin herself has 1 chance in 17 of giving birth to a set of twins.
- Since dizygotic twinning appears to be inherited through the mother, having a husband who is a twin seems to make no difference.
- Twinning does not skip generations (as was once thought).
- Certain fertility drugs increase the chance of conceiving twins (e.g., clomid - 1 in 15).
- Approximately 70% of all twins being born currently result from fertility treatment.
- African-Americans are more likely to conceive twins spontaneously than Caucasians.

The rate for Asians is even lower.

- Fertility decreases with age. For those pregnancies that do occur, older women have twins more often than younger women, especially women 35 to 39 years old. Between 1969 and 1994, the percentage of women over 30 having their first baby rose from 4% to 21%.
- The more children a woman has, the more likely she is to finally have a set of twins.
- Taller women have twins more often than shorter women.
- A woman who conceives while she is breastfeeding a previous baby is 9 times more likely to have twins than if she was bottle-feeding with cow’s milk or formula.

Although these numbers are prone to change in the future, they give a rough idea that certain women are more likely to have twins. Statistics apply to populations, not to individuals. The “law of large numbers” is at work here.

What may happen to any particular woman is difficult to predict. For example, the chance of having a boy is about the same as having a girl, but we all know of large families with exclusively one or the other. Although Hellin’s Rule would suggest that an given family needs to have 90 pregnancies for two sets of twins to occur, in reality multiple-multiples happen quite often.

And as a matter of fact, many extended, blood-related families with five or more sets of monozygotic or dizygotic twins have been reported. ♡

Dr. Steinman is an OB/gyn in Astoria, NY. If you have specific questions for him about zygosity, e-mail him at DAV4601@aol.com. He may be able to provide answers and discussion in upcoming issues of TWINS™.

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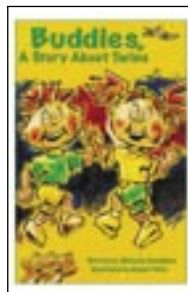
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growing stages

Bee sting remedy

There's no doubt, getting stung by a bee hurts. The sting happens quickly and the bee disappears before your twin even knows what hit. Unfortunately, your young-un' is left howling, displaying a red swollen welt that stings and will eventually itch. For quick and long-lasting relief, immediately apply baking soda paste to the area (baking soda with a little water in it to make a toothpaste-like mixture). It's likely this home remedy works by neutralizing the acidic venom of the bee. Apply the paste immediately after a sting occurs. Within minutes, take a stiff object with a flat edge, like a credit card, and gently scrape it across the welt to remove the stinger. Do not pull the stinger straight out—this releases additional venom into the area. Once the stinger is removed, apply another layer of paste to the welt. If your twin is allergic to bees or begins experiencing hives or swelling of the mouth or throat, call 911 immediately.

Ever find yourself comparing the sleeping habits of your babies to those of your neighbor, only to discover her baby takes two long naps during the day and sleeps through the entire night? Before you become too envious, remind yourself all babies are different. Be

Sleep guide



Audrey and Sophia, 7 weeks

careful to avoid the trap of comparing your twin infants to singletons. Remember, your twins might be getting more sleep than you think, just not at the same times as each other. Here's a chart providing an overview of sleeping patterns and hours of sleep per day for babies and toddlers.

Age	Total Hours Spent Napping	Number of Naps	Nighttime Hours	Hours Sleeping per Day
Newborn	Sleeps in 2-3 hour increments for a total of 16-18 hours per day			
1 month	6-7	3	8-10	15-16
3 month	6	3	9	15
6 months	4	2	10-11	14-15
9 months	2-3	2	11-12	14
12 months	2-3	1-2	11-12	13-14
18 months	2-3	1	11-12	13-14
2 years	1-2	1	11-12	13
3 years	1-2	1	11	12

Baby teeth when to expect what

Tooth eruption can begin anytime between three months and 1 year of age. Typically, your twins will cut their first teeth around the same time you did as a baby. Although it is difficult to predict a new tooth's arrival, your twins are very likely

to exhibit symptoms that include increased saliva and drooling, increased crewing and biting, gum tenderness and swelling, and possibly some ear-pulling. Many parents also report they notice low-grade fevers, interrupted sleep, diarrhea, diaper rash and increased irritability and crying. However, there are no published research findings that support these symptoms for teething.

Therefore, if you believe your twins are cutting teeth, but they also have fevers or diarrhea, consult your pediatrician, as these may be signs of an infection. Around 6 months, expect the bottom two front teeth (incisors) to erupt. These are followed by the top two incisors a month or two later. Around 10-14 months, your twins' first molars should appear. And between 15-18 months, the canines should erupt. Most children cut their second molars when they are between 2 and 3 years old.

Temperature-taking tips

Fevers can range from low-grade to high depending on where you take the reading. Rectal temperatures are the most accurate and are preferred for children under 5 years. Axillary (armpit) temperatures tend to be least accurate. If your children are older than 5 years, an oral reading should be sufficient.

To take a rectal temperature, have your child lie on her tummy across your lap. Advance the tip of the thermometer about $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in babies under 6 months and about 1" for older children. Use petroleum jelly for comfort. Do NOT force the thermometer against resistance.

If you must take an axillary temperature, be sure to place the thermometer in a dry armpit and hold your child's arm closed by placing the elbow against the chest.

Oral temperatures are taken under the tongue, towards the back, with your child's mouth closed. Be sure no hot or cold liquids have been consumed within 30 minutes.

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Do your twins really need to attend preschool?

by Heather A. Siladi



For better or worse, our children are growing up in a fast and competitive world. We walk a fine line between endowing our twins with the tools they need to succeed, and defending their rights to just be kids—to engage in unstructured and unfettered playtime, to explore and learn by their own initiative and their endless adventures, to run carefree through the world for their first four or five years at least.

Of the many decisions parents must make, one that is very controversial and confusing is whether to put their twins in preschool. Should they go at all? And if so, at what age, how often, and for how many hours at a time? What kind of preschool is best? What do they really need to learn?

“Preschool is the new kindergarten,” says child psychologist and mother of twins Lori Rappaport, PhD, San Diego. Dr. Rappaport devotes a section of her practice website, www.growingupgreat.com, to preschool readiness, and she spoke with TWINS™ Magazine about twins and preschool.

“There’s more academic work to do in kindergarten these days, and teachers may not have time to work on socialization skills,” says Dr. Rappaport. “It’s less traumatic for kids to work these socialization

Many experts today believe preschools should focus on developing social rather than academic skills.

issues out in preschool where the setting is designed to be more nurturing and comforting.”

Mame Campbell-Salin, program director of Glenridge Cooperative Nursery School, San Francisco, says, “My goal is to send kids into kindergarten ready to play with their peers. They need to be able to say, ‘Stop it, you’re bothering me’ with conviction. And they need to be confident enough to let a teacher know when they need something.”

Many experts today believe preschools should focus on developing social rather than academic skills. “Children drilled to learn certain tasks before they are ready do not, in the long run, end up having an advantage academically. In fact, such stress-

ful situations may be damaging. Instead, good preschool programs help children develop self-esteem by giving them opportunities to learn about themselves and their world by providing experiences that challenge but don’t frustrate or overwhelm,” offers Dr. Rappaport.

But is preschool really necessary? Perhaps not, for parents who have extended family or close friends nearby, so twins have group socialization with cousins or other kids their age. But these situations aren’t always available in today’s highly-mobile world.

Inadequate support systems, coupled with safety concerns, often mean kids today have less free-reign than previously, Campbell-Salin points out. “At lunchtime, my mom would feed whoever’s kids were around, knowing that her kids were fed wherever they were. We just don’t have those kinds of communities any more, where kids have tight social circles in which they learn how to behave in a group and how to behave in society.”

Contrary to what many hyper-achieving parents believe, children do not need to be able to identify colors by name, identify and name shapes, count to one-hundred, or be able to recite the entire alphabet before entering kindergarten. However, parents

who frequently read to their children from birth, using colorful, fun picture books, will find that their children gain these skills quite readily before age 5. Reading to children is critical preparation for entering school.

A time and place for everything

Key questions today seem to center more on when, where, and for how long to send kids to preschool. Knowing when they are ready and choosing a preschool with which you are comfortable can make a positive difference in how your twins will adjust to the experience.

Dr. Rappaport thinks the most important consideration for parents of twins is that a preschool have enough classrooms for each age group that parents can eventually separate the twins into separate rooms when they appear ready for separation.

“It’s usually better to start them out in the same classroom to ease the transition,” says Dr. Rappaport, “but twins should be separated eventually so that they develop

Preschool programs: Are they worth it?

Infant to 2 yrs:

Often called preschool, but more accurately described as daycare. Full-time daycare is usually chosen out of necessity for parents who work. Part-time daycare provides some socialization for babies and toddlers and gives mom/dad some time alone if close friends or family are not nearby. Best caretaker-to-child ratio is 1:3.

2 yrs:

Toddler programs are a combination of daycare and preschool. Can be useful for working parents but not necessary if parents or children aren’t ready for preschool. Important: Programs for this age group should focus on social skills, facilitate playtime, rather than academics. Best teacher-to-child ratio is 1:5.

3 yrs:

Primary focus should be on socializing and play. Three is a good age to start twins in preschool for a couple of hours a day, one or two days a week—this leaves plenty of time to test the waters, adjust schedules, try separate classrooms. Best teacher-to-child ratio is 1:8.

4 yrs:

May incorporate more academics. A MUST: program should avoid applying pressure to perform, allowing children to acquire skills at different rates. Undue pressure on 4-year-old causes child to feel deficient; more likely, the child simply needs more time. Best teacher-to-child ratio is 1:12.

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Preschool readiness

Lori Rappaport, PhD, pediatric psychologist, suggests using the following indicators of preschool readiness. Parents may also read up on preschool readiness at www.growing-upgreat.com. These guidelines have nothing to do with chronological age of a child, and everything to do with emotional development.

1 Child demonstrates a sense of confidence and security.

2 Child displays emerging independence by doing things for himself.

3 Child shows frequent desire to explore, seek new places, events away from home.

4 Child is capable of separating comfortably from parents or caregivers.

5 Child has sufficient verbal skills to communicate with other children and adults.

6 Child has begun to relate to other children, share, take turns and be part of a group.

7 Child is able to stay focused, and engage in an organized activity briefly.

8 Child is able to meet physical demands of preschool environment (stairs, toilet).

Many cues can help determine when twins might benefit from preschool.

They might begin to fight a lot more, or may be so close they won't engage in group play

or associate with any other children.

a healthy sense of self, and so they will not be traumatized when (and if) they are separated in kindergarten. There are a lot of expectations in kindergarten, and it's better if they don't have to deal with the separation from their twin at the same time."

Many cues can help determine when twins might benefit from preschool. They may begin to fight more, or may be so close they are reluctant to engage in group play or associate with any other children. If one twin dominates the other—whether it's an attempt to control, or an overzealous effort to be helpful or protective—both twins benefit from regular socialization with larger groups of children. This is one reason why twin playgroups, readily available through most twins clubs, are so helpful to parents of young twins.

Preschool might be appropriate when mom and dad are ready. This indicator is key. Parents needn't feel guilty if they're motivated in part by a desire to have a few hours to themselves. Perhaps your own parents didn't put you in preschool, but how often were you with your grandparents or an aunt or uncle? Parents without close family members to share in childcare need time to catch their breaths and recharge batteries.

Tough issues can arise with early preschool—separation anxiety, or one twin adjusting well while the other isn't. "The most important thing," advises Dr. Rappaport, "is that parents choose a preschool that feels right for them and will work to meet the needs of the individual

family."

Preschoolers should attend school only a few hours a day so they're not overwhelmed, but exactly how long varies by child and "may need to be adjusted as you go along," says Dr. Rappaport.

Parents should consider when choosing a preschool the education level of the staff. "Caretakers should be trained in child development so they can facilitate child-directed playtime and communicate effectively with parents about a child's progress and possible areas of concern," says Campbell-Salin.

Tales of two moms

Lori Martin, a San Diego mother of 3½-year-old b/g twins, Cameron and Nicole, decided to put her twins in preschool when she found a program near home designed for 2-year-olds who did not need to be potty-trained. "Since my children were together 24 hours a day, they had started fighting a lot. I hoped that putting them in a program two days a week with other children would give them a break from one another, and allow their individual personalities to shine through," said Martin.

Not all 2-year-olds are ready for school, though. How did Nicole and Cameron handle the transition? "The first week was a little hard on them, especially for my son. He had a lot of separation anxiety. After that, they really enjoyed the class and other children. Since they were able to interact with children other than 'their twin' at school, they got along much better at home.

My son had a speech delay, probably due to his sister's non-stop talking. Being in a classroom with other children helped my son open up and start talking more," Martin recounted.

Martin doesn't think there are any drawbacks to having her toddlers in preschool. "My children are very happy on the days they go to school and socialize with their friends. They only go for three hours at a time, so I see no cons about our situation."

Janice Milford of Akron, Ohio, a freelance designer and mother of 9-year-old twins, Nathan and Brian, decided against sending her twins to preschool when they were young even for a few days a week. "I don't know, they were just so little and so cute. We would go on backyard adventures, and every time I saw that look of wonder on their little faces, whether they were watching a bee pollinate a flower or lifting a rock to watch the 'rollerpillar' bugs scatter, I would think, 'I'm so glad I'm not missing this.' And anyway, I never went to preschool and I

turned out fine," she said.

Skipping preschool made the kindergarten transition more difficult for Brian and Nathan, however, Milford readily acknowledged. "When I sent my boys to kindergarten, they could count, write their names, color inside the lines, and they were even starting to read. The problem was they could not sit still, raise their hands to speak, or sit through story-time without engaging the teacher in conversation." They simply hadn't learned those skills that come from being in groups.

It seemed as if every other kid in kindergarten had been to preschool and was already acclimated to a school environment, Milford said. Nathan and Brian took a little longer to adjust to life in the classroom, but they've done very well in school ever since, she said. Missing preschool doesn't seem to have had any lasting effect on them.

"They're doing great in school. They're going into 4th grade now, and they're reading on a 6th grade level. They still have trouble sitting still and 'thinking inside

the box,' but I think that's just a matter of who they are," said Milford. "They've both had a teacher or two who appreciated their creativity and spunk. It helps that they are such sweet boys, and I think their sweetness might have been squelched if they'd been forced to establish their place in a social pecking order at the age of 2 or 3."

Janice might consider placing the boys in preschool part-time at about age 4 if she had it to do all over again, she said. "It's probably better if they're familiar with the concept of a classroom before they're expected to perform in one."

Heather Siladi lives in Blue Ash, Ohio. She is a freelance writer and mom of 2-year-old twins.

References:

Lori Rappaport, PhD
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Scott and Gretchen, 2 years

“And they’re off!”

Twin acceleration and other aerodynamic mysteries of multiples

by Liz Gooch

As anyone who has ever been in a room full of toddlers can attest, these pint-sized beings possess energy that seems to defy conventional laws of thermodynamics. Much like bumblebees, who should not be able to fly but just don't know it, toddlers attack each day with focused energy that would make an adult implode.

This seems especially true of multiples. In defiance of traditional physical properties, energy between young twins seems not only to transfer between the parties but also to multiply.



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by Lynn Loreng

This behavior may be observed in those (rare) unsupervised moments when your duo accomplishes more destruction than would seem possible for two 35-pound, 36-inch-high people. The result is more than simply double what each child could possibly accomplish acting alone—it is magnified by some exponential factor unique to multiples.

I once foolishly sent my two to their room for a “cooling off” period toward the end of a particularly nerve-wracking day, hoping to calm my high-energy tikes. Instead, the interlude served only to provide an opportunity to carry out a thoughtfully-crafted plan lacking only an unsupervised moment in which to put it into action. Mere minutes elapsed (the dead quiet clued me in) before the room was transformed from a bedroom into a toddler amusement park. Both beds were stripped of coverings and mattresses were turned on end to create slides. Plastic protective mattress covers, paired with soft cotton sweat pants proved a perfect combination to achieve maximum aerodynamic downhill acceleration.

Our challenge is not only to survive these years with as little property damage as possible, but to maintain our sense of humor and hang on to whatever shreds of parental authority we can.

Twin acceleration cannot be overcome, but perhaps it can be channeled. If mischief can be multiplied, then so, too, can industry and empathy. The power of teamwork is a wonderful lesson for children who grow up in pairs, trios or more. Our duo’s enormous power of destruction, given the proper circumstances, can become unlimited potential for exponential laughter and magnified acceptance.

My husband and I saw our first indication of how the power of twin teamwork would serve our duo well the first day their school bus arrived. Our daughter was eager for transition to a Big Kid School, but our son wavered as the bus approached. His steps slowed, then stopped altogether as his grip on my hand tightened.

His twin sister gave him the courage he needed. Seeing her brother’s distress, she took his hand and, led the way, said “Come on, let’s go!” And they climbed the steps of the bus together.

The law of thermodynamics as applied to multiples states that twin energy can be multiplied to amazing—sometimes hair-raising!—effect. A corollary is that their unique energy can be transferred directly from one twin to the other. After surviving years of barely restrained chaos to find our toddlers were now children, we witnessed the first day of school the true power of twin-energy. No longer simply a force capable of destruction rivaled only by Mother Nature, one twin’s determination was exactly the right amount for both of them! ♥

Liz Gooch, a mom of three in suburban Atlanta married to a police officer, is a biomedical research scientist. She enjoys writing for work and pleasure. She’s an enthusiastic reader of TWINS™ since becoming a mother of twins.



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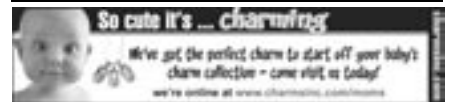
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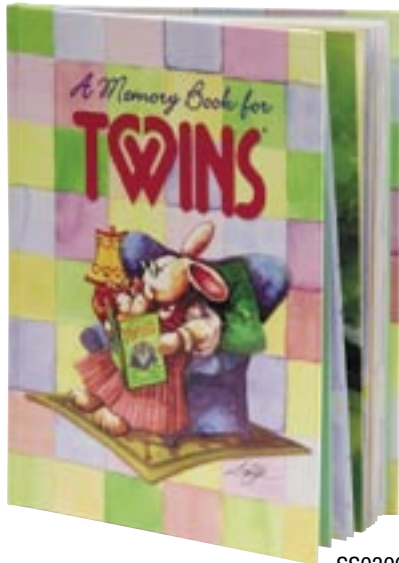
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Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of the gift of twinship and the promises and encouragement a mother gives to her children in return. Available with blue, pink or yellow border, with matching ribbon. 11" x 14" matte print comes with a gift envelope to save a special letter for each twin. Also available: SS05003 5" x 7" card for \$3.25. Available in three colors: blue, pink and yellow.



Unframed Art



Gift Cards

Be sure to include your color choice on the order form or when you order by phone.

TWIN HEARTS

Awed to be expecting twins,
A mother's journey now begins
Blessed with heaven's gift of two,
I fell in love with both of you.

As days passed and months moved on,
I prayed for two, born safe and strong.
Thrilled by the promise of the joys to-be,
Like two voices joined in ABC's.
Shared sweet kisses on cheeks and lips,
Two toddlers riding atop two hips.
I promise to see you each as one,
Two connected, yet free lives begun.
Both loved completely, for all they are,
Following their own bright star.

I promise to encourage your treasured bond,
from babies to children and beyond.
Partners, soul mates and best friends,
The love of each of you will depend.

At last I stroke each newborn face,
I knew my heart was touched by grace.
My hands now full—as most will say,
Yet my life never richer than today.

Awed to hold my little ones,
Our lives together have begun.
Blessed with heaven's gift of two,
I forever love the both of you.

SS05002 Unframed Art \$16.99 each

SS05003 Cards \$ 3.25 each

"The Twins Room" Door Hanger

Everything is ducky with this cute framed print to hang on your twins' doorknob. The 3½" x 5", white, framed print comes with a green double satin ribbon to hang it from a doorknob, door or wall. Packaged in a white toile coordinated gift bag.

SS05001 \$13.95 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"

Twins Blessing Photo Frame

Show off your darling twins with this charming photo frame from Laura Leiden Calligraphy. The rich mahogany-colored frame includes an oval opening in a moss-colored mat for your favorite photograph of your twins, plus a thoughtful verse that celebrates the differences in your children. Their arrival is a true blessing in your life! A wonderful gift to celebrate the birth of your twins for yourself. 10" x 12" frame holds one 6" x 4" photograph.

SS06004 \$24.99 each



Melissa and Doug

Noah's Ark and Circus Train Photo Frames

Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created these colorful hand-painted Noah's Ark and Circus Train solid-wood table-top frames. These beautifully crafted frames will complement any nursery or home. (Overall size of Noah's Ark is 11" x 9½". Circus Train is 14" x 10½") They each hold three, 2 1/8" x 2 1/8" photographs.

SF05001 Noah's Ark \$19.99 each

SF05002 Circus Train \$19.99 each



"Discover Wildlife, Raise Twins" Ceramic Wall 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. 5¾"H x 7¼"W.

SF90092 \$17.99 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 4½" x 6" and holds two 1¾" x 2¾" photographs. Twice as Nice Bears and Balloons Frame is 8¾" x 6¾" and holds one 4" x 6" photograph.

A. SF04002 Stars and Hearts \$12.99 each

B. SF04003 Bears and Balloons \$14.99 each



A.



B.



"Two Peas in a Pod" Personalized 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.

∴ "Can you hear me, now?" >>>



Double Takes

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

1:: Ashlyn and Brooke
5 months
Pembroke Pines, FL



2:: Robert and Greg
8 months
Glendale, CA



3:: Megan and Matthew
8 months
League City, TX



4:: Emmaleigh and Haleigh
2 months
Beverly, MA



5:: Julia and Leah
16 months
Milford, MA



6:: Talia and Anelise
6 months
Selden, NY



7:: Skyler and Krysta, 5 years
Kaleb and Abigail, 10 months
Pittsburgh, PA



8:: Scott and Tyler
3½ months
Atlanta, GA



9:: Taylor and Brooke
2½ years
Ladera Ranch, CA



10:: Heather and Holly
3½ months
Pickerington, OH



11:: Julia and Owen
7½ Months
Cary, NC



12:: Cameron and Carson
3 years
Farmington, CT



13:: Ella and Sydney
11 months
Oakton, VA



14:: Ashley and Danielle
6 months
Old Lyme, CT



15:: Brayden and Jayce
2½ years
Marshall, MN



16:: Dermot and Mary Grace
11 months
Millburn, NJ



17:: Jadelynn and Jazzlynn
5 months
Palmdale, CA



18:: Tara and Kylie
14 months
Johnston, RI



19:: Madden and Helena
6 months
Vancouver, WA



20:: Nick and Andy, 5 years
Jake and Alex, 3 months
Austin, TX

Photo Tips

What we are looking for:

- Sharp focus
- Crisp, clean, vivid color (no red, 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 49 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
11211 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.

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Figuring it out

The other night my four daughters were all talking about their birthdays, when my 3-year-old twin Saylor asked me when her birthday is. So I said, "April 16," and she quickly replied, "Hey, Lake's birthday is April 16th too!" She was so amazed that her twin, Layken's, birthday was the exact same day as her own. I said, "Yes, you and Layken have the same birthday, because you are what?" And she said, sweetly, "We're twins!"

Kamisha, mom of 4 girls
On the TWINS™ Message Board

Doorknob devilry

One of my 20-month-old twins, Anthony, got up very early this morning and figured out how to turn all the doorknobs and open all the doors upstairs, waking up everyone in the house. Then, once everyone was up, he laid down and went back to sleep.

Beth, mom of 4, incl. twins Molly and Anthony
On the TWINS™ Message Board

Well, that's one way to do it!

My little Samantha loves to have her feet tickled. When you stop, she starts kicking her legs and whimpering until you start up again. Her twin, Katie, has yet to cut a tooth, so she is still chewing on anything and everything she can get her hands and mouth on. Sam discovered that if she sticks her foot in Kate's mouth, Kate will chew on it and it will tickle. So Sam keeps scooting on her little butt in Kate's direction, with her foot up in the air, trying to get it into Katie's mouth. Katie then chews on Sam's foot and makes Sam giggle so hard it makes Katie start giggling. It's times like this that I know it must be wonderful to be a twin.

Christina, mom of 3
On the TWINS™ Message Board

Twin sisters follow family footsteps in Peace Corps

Identical twins, Lauren and Connie Head, 24, from Wenatchee, Wash., headed into the Peace Corps together early this year, following in the footsteps of both parents,

who served in the Peace Corps in the 1960s, as well as the footsteps of their aunt, two uncles, and two



cousins who also volunteered. Lauren serves in Nicaragua, teaching English to students 5 to 45 and helping form a community bank. Connie serves as a youth volunteer in Honduras, and helped coach her village's Little League baseball team, taking them to Honduras's first national youth baseball tournament. Connie visited Lauren in Honduras in April for a reunion following the longest period they'd ever gone without seeing each other in their lives. The biggest difference between Lauren's and Connie's Peace Corps experience now and that of their parents is the ease of communications with the home front, due to cell-phone technology. No use of "snail-mail" any more. The Peace Corps celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2006.

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Elise and Sophie, 16 months



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