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MOM'S

4

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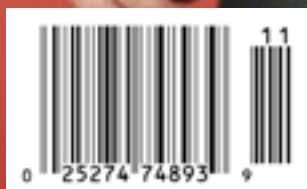
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Cover Photography by Glenn Covalli



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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

TWINs™ 3

My hilarious discovery when our “puzzle” came together

Organizing an issue of TWINS™ is like putting a jigsaw puzzle together—you can have all the pieces lined up and ready to fit together but you don’t get “the whole picture” until the issue actually is in production and becomes a unit. Couple that process with the bulging files of articles categorized by subject that have been submitted by hundreds of journalists, feature writers and families for possible use in the magazine, and you have a thoroughly chaotic stewpot of ever-changing variables. This issue contains, as every issue does, a mix of reportorial articles, “expert” commentary, and tales-from-the-trenches sent to us by parents whose stories are instructive for every family walking the path of twindom. But the serendipity of life is such that funny things happen along the way to finalizing the package you hold in your hands.

What’s hilarious is that when “the whole” came together this time, I realized we have a several laugh-out-loud stories about twinnies puking all over the place (pardon me for using such a disagreeable word, but hey, let’s call a spade a spade) that are sure to make you react, “Oh, gosh, I can relate to that!” and help you prepare for the worst when it happens. (See pages 11 and 37.)

You’ll also be fascinated by several articles related to TTTS, including one about a case of TTTS that went undiagnosed and could have resulted in a true disaster (page 26). The lessons for families expecting twins (tell your friends and club colleagues!) and for all of us are these: Ask medical professionals a lot of questions, don’t be complacent about what doctors tell you, if your body signals otherwise, and listen carefully to your body.

Colic is a true medical mystery, without known causes and without effective treatments or known cures. Horrors! All the “gripe waters” and bouncy techniques are basically placebos. Read all about it, pages 18 and 19.

Amy Taylor presents a discussion of how she faces the challenges presented by having who are strikingly different intellectually—all parents of twins can learn from her article, because dealing with these issues has everything to do with treating each twin as an individual (pages 16-18). Similarly, Dr. John Wood addresses the issue of avoiding the risk your non-disabled twin will get lost in the chaos and shuffle of daily life when caring for the special-needs twin (page 24).

November and December are busy months, filled with hair-raising stress but also wonderful traditions to savor with your family. Be sure to relish those times. Create treasured holiday traditions. These are what your children’s memories are made of— food, family gatherings, silly songs, storybooks read together as a family. We wish you thankfulness, joy, special pleasures and the gift of love this holiday season.



EDITOR IN CHIEF

Susan Alt

Identical twin brothers Derek and Daryl Fathauer, 21, seniors at the University of Louisville, were invited to play as amateurs in the PGA Tour’s October tournament in Port Lucie, Fla. This marked the first time identical twin brothers have played in the same PGA tournament in more than 25 years. (Curtis and Allen Strange played in the 1981 PGA Texas Open.) Derek and Daryl began playing golf when they were 10 years old.



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Are double-bouncy-seats still available?

Please help me find an item that I ordered nine years ago for myself from a company that advertised in TWINS™ Magazine. When I had my own twins, I ordered a double bouncy-seat for them, and I loved it. Then I ordered another one about five years ago for a good friend who was having twins. She loved it too. Now I want to order a double bouncer again for someone I know who is having twins, but can't find one anywhere. I have Googled every possible combination of words but nobody seems to have a double bouncy-seat for multiples. Can you find out for me the name of the company that sold them?

Gina Biederman

Via voice message

Editor's note: We've had a couple of phone calls during the last 2-3 years inquiring about double-bouncers, but there's no longer a double-bouncer on the market that we know of. The demand for doubles was probably pretty limited, and many moms and dads want separate bouncer-seats that can be moved individually to different locations, depending on which baby needs bouncing at any given moment. Sorry. If anybody knows of a double-bouncer that can be had, let me know at twins.editor@businessword.com and I'll pass the information along.

It's really hard to avoid comparisons

I was very interested in Dr. Wood's article on twins with increased needs in the last several issues, but almost feel silly considering myself a mom of a special-needs twin. I apologize if my comments seem trivial to a parent whose child has more complicated issues. I have 19-month-old fraternal twin boys, Aaron and Evan. Evan was found to have a small head and small cerebellum when I was 17 weeks pregnant.

We did not do any invasive testing until he was born and he, like Dr. Wood's son, was diagnosed with microcephaly. My other twin, like Dr. Wood's, is healthy and making all milestones for his age. Evan was always a little slower than Aaron until around 12 months when Aaron began using words and then started cruising and finally walking at 15 months. Now it seems like Evan is falling farther behind.

Evan has been in physical therapy for about a year and recently began OT and speech therapy in our home. Evan began walking right before 18 months and is starting to say "mama" and "dada" and use more consonant sounds and clap his hands, so we know the therapy is helping him catch up. Like Dr. Wood's son, our Evan wants to play with his twin and his 3 year-old sister and is a constant source of positive attention from strangers. He is the happiest kid.

My issue is that it is hard not to compare the two boys—it's as if we have a "control" against which to measure Evan. And it is hard to think what will happen in the future in the course of Evan's schooling. One neurologist we saw when Evan was 7 weeks old told us Evan would never attend college or have a "real" job.

I guess because Aaron and Evan are twins, I pictured them going off to college together. Now I don't even know if they can

attend the same elementary school. I don't want to sound petty or shallow, but I want them to be viewed by others as being the same. I cringe when people ask the age difference between my boys—Evan appears smaller than Aaron because of his small head size.

I can't help but worry about him—one specialist said I will probably worry for 18 years. But I want him to be part of a twin relationship—sharing friends, and adventures. I don't know if Dr. Wood could ever turn my comments into anything universal, but the first time I read his letter to the editor of TWINS, I felt as if I was not alone. Evan is having an MRI at the end of this month and so we will be looking forward to your next columns.

Melissa Brill

Via email

Disabled twin teaches family important lessons

I really enjoy my subscription to TWINS™ Magazine. I've learned about topics I hadn't even thought of and feel better prepared with each issue to tackle multiples parenting!

I live in Denver and have boy/girl twins a year old. My son was born with spina bifida and I remember feeling so overwhelmed at the prenatal diagnosis... first twins, and now a baby with a birth defect and special needs. I have been amazed at how many twins I have since met with the same combo—one "healthy" and one with special needs. (As a sidenote, I appreciate your articles and features that address this.) In any case, I know that families like ours would love to see a photo of twins that reflects this unique situation. If you are ever interested in doing a cover shot with an able-bodied twin and a twin in a wheelchair—let me know.

Additionally, if you ever want a Mom of twins to write about this situation, I would be happy to give that a try, too! While it was overwhelming at first, we feel so lucky as a family now and our little boy has taught my whole family some truly valuable lessons. (We also have a son, 6, and a daughter, 4.)

Thanks for your magazine!

Maureen Ediger

Via email

Family with TTTS survivors seeks contacts, info

I attended the Twins Days Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio, last summer with my daughters, Allison and Ashley, 12, who survived TTTS. (They were born prematurely at 29.5 weeks.) While there, I saw your magazine. I am looking for any studies, medical cases or data regarding twins who have survived TTTS. Do you know if there are any statistics of TTTS survivors that might be available, or whether my girls can participate in any studies to help other families?

One twin, Ashley, has diplegic spastic CP, which affects her hands, coupled with learning issues. Allison, who also has learning issues, is almost at grade level (6th) in reading, finally, but still has a little way to go. Ashley experiences periods of three to six months when she loses control of her bladder and bowel, then

continued on page 6

regains control gradually. She'll be okay for a period of time, and then lose control again. This has been happening for approximately two yrs. The neurologist says her CT and MRI scans are negative for anything that would indicate why this happens, and Ashley's brain waves are normal. We are now going to see a special pediatric urologist. I'd like to know if any of your readers have experienced this with their kids, or have any comments/thoughts about this situation. Are there questions I should be asking the pediatric urologist when we have our visit?

Rhonda Kieffer
Via email

Wow! Sept/Oct issue was the best issue yet!

I received my Sept./Oct. 2007 issue of TWINS™ Magazine today and just had to write and tell you it's your best one yet! I found myself flagging numerous pages for future reference.

On page 7, you mentioned three PGA pro golfers who are dads of twins, which I added to my "famous parents of twins" list. I write a regular online column for Mommies Magazine called "Loving and Living with Twins and Multiples," so I flagged your article on postpartum depression and Dr. John Wood's column on the higher incidence of birth defects in twins as ideas for future articles.

I was thrilled to see Kim Bleich's article about "coming out of the fog" because she gave me hope that I would eventually emerge from my own fog as I struggle through each day with very active 3-year-old twin boys!

I grinned at the brief item about the NoThrow tether designed to keep kids from throwing their bottles and sippy cups—my teenage son, Taylor, invented a similar product for his school's Invention Fair! He called it the Baby Bottle Bouncer.

I was excited to see the letter from Kari Loth in your special MailBox section because her twins, Chrissa and Courtney, are the cover girls on my book, "Twice the Love"! Kari wrote a great story for the book.

I enjoyed your article about "mompreneurs" as I, too, have found the work-at-home situation to be the best of both worlds for our family.

And, finally, I'm always thrilled to see a beautiful ad for my book, "Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Families . . . With Twins, Multiples and Singletons" and to have my books, "Twice the Love" and "It's Twins," on your Parents' Bookshelf. Thanks again for putting together a fantastic magazine for families with twins and multiples!

Susan M. Heim
Author and Mom of twins
Via email

Massachusetts legislators taking a wrong turn

It is so disappointing to see what is happening to our twin bill (Twin placement in school) in Massachusetts, which is unfortunately in a state of crisis. Thank you for your outspoken and repeated attempts to educate the public on the topic of forced separation of twins in school.

ration of twins in school.

Last year I was unsuccessful in persuading my own twins' school that separation was not appropriate for them. The consequences were devastating for my children, one of whom is now diagnosed with clinical depression. Both are now in therapy.

As a result, I have been working closely with two mothers of twins who have organized the effort for a Massachusetts law because this should never happen to any child again.

Unfortunately, we discovered during August that an opposition bill giving full authority to school principals to make the determination on school placement is further along than our bill, and will soon have hearings before the committee on education. We are in crisis mode to defeat this bill

We are hoping the letter you sent to the New York State legislature in support of their bill will help us. While the Tully research shows there is no persuasive case to be made on academic grounds for separation, there is no similar study to show that separation can have a very serious negative impact on twins emotionally and psychologically. The strong wording of your letter in detailing the possible consequences for twins and the lack of public understanding about the twin bond is helpful because it comes from someone with many years of experience working with twins, parents of twins and their issues.

The history of this opposition bill is truly unfortunate. A neighbor of the state senator who introduced it asked the senator to write and sponsor a bill giving parents of twins a say in school placement decisions. The state senator then called all eight school principals in his district, and wrote a bill giving them the final say. How sad to think that the efforts of a mother of twins to get a voice produced such a result!

I have admired your strong public support in the past on this topic, and hope you can help us.

Karen Stark
Via email

Editor's note: We're working on it. We'll do everything possible. Wouldn't you know, school principals often do this "power play" just to reinforce their own authority?

More twins-placement issues

I am the mother of 8-year-old twin daughters in Ohio. We are facing the issue of the school principal wanting to forcibly separate our girls. I have been unable to find any information on legislation for Ohio. Could you tell me Ohio stands, and how I can get a letter such as the one I read on your website sent to our officials on Ohio? I appreciate any help I can get!

Karlene Runge
Via email

Editor's note: Go to www.twinslaw.com for information on what's happening with legislation or petition drives in each state. If and when you have a sponsor for legislation, and can give me specific legislators' names and addresses, that's when my letters will do the most good. Go for it!

I live in Chatham, N.J., and am the mother of 4-year-old fraternal twin boys. Currently they are together in preschool. We are trying

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*-- Tracey, Mother of 3,
Forked River, NJ*

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to figure out what would be best for them next year and would like to have the choice. I have spoken with the principal of our local elementary school and she is receptive to hearing our opinions but there is no guarantee she will keep them together.

Additionally, I am working to get legislation passed in New Jersey to make classroom placement the parents' choice. We were lucky to get bills, which give parents the choice, sponsored in both the Senate and the Assembly. However, the bills weren't heard in committee prior to the legislature breaking for summer recess. My understanding is that the Chairmen of the Education committees choose what is heard in committee—if they don't bring a bill up for a committee vote, then it dies without being heard. We only have until Dec. 31 to enact legislation or the bill dies and we start the process all over again.

I have seen your offer in TWINS™ Magazine to write letters, and think at this point, it would be enormously helpful if you would do so for us.

Dorothy Frank, dorothyannfrank@yahoo.com
Via email

Editor's note: The letters have gone out. Good luck!

TTTS occurs more often than anyone thought

I saw the latest TWINS™ Magazine. Great publication for Sept./Oct. I'm glad to see Dr. John Wood discussing twins with special needs and I'm equally excited about his bringing more light to shine on TTTS as well. According to the most recent statistics,

Dr. Wood's data on the occurrence of TTTS seriously understates what we believe is really happening: Presentations at the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine's annual pregnancy conference ilast February noted there are quite possibly 4,000 to 4,500 pregnancies a year being affected by TTTS, not 2,000 as Dr. Wood indicated.

Importantly, determining the real impact of TTTS is quite difficult because of lack of education and awareness in the medical community, which

commonly leads to misdiagnosis (or the condition never being diagnosed or reported). Generally TTTS is believed to affect at least 15% of all monochorionic diamnionic pregnancies. However, this "incidence rate" might be in the range of 20% to 25% of all monochorionic diamnionic pregnancies.

Furthermore, as presented at the SMFM conference, it is entirely possible that there will be a twofold or threefold increase in the number of TTTS occurrences by 2011. Why is this? Much is being attributed to increased use of IVF. While we traditionally and rightfully think of IVF as increasing the likelihood of fraternal twins, in reality the medical community is seeing an increase (as a percentage of population) in identical twinning following IVF as well. IVF implantation is now frequently, if not routinely, taking place on the 5th day after fertilization, to increase the chances of the implanted embryos "taking hold." As a result, there is a greater chance the embryo will split, as well. Thus as IVF becomes more frequent, the incidence of identical twinning is predicted to increase and to result in more TTTS cases. Awareness is so important.

Lonnie Somers, CEO & Founder
Fetal Hope Foundation
Littleton, Colo.
Via email

Enormous pressure to breastfeed babies

In response to Alyson G. (Sept./Oct., 2007, MailBox) about the guilt she feels after not being able to breastfeed her twin girls, I know exactly how Alyson feels—my girls came at 35 weeks and I had every intention of breastfeeding. However, I encountered the same issues as Alyson: My body did not produce enough milk, the girls (who became accustomed to a steady flow of milk via bottle while in NICU) would get frustrated, and more times than not, I'd end up in tears thinking I was a bad mother. To make matters worse, we're now dealing with a huge resurgence of campaigns to breastfeed. So if you're pregnant or a mother of an infant, there's a lot more pressure to breastfeed.

While I do appreciate the help lactation consultants give, sometimes they can make the situation even worse by making a mother feel guilty if she even considers feeding her children formula. I finally decided my sanity was more beneficial to my daughters than trying to get my uncooperative body to produce breastmilk.

In the end, I opted for formula and don't regret one minute of it. My girls are 5 months now and each weighs about 14 lbs. and each is growing beautifully. Now don't get me wrong, if given another opportunity, I would definitely try breastfeeding. But if I can't, there will be no guilt here. The most important thing is that my children are fed.

Nancy Turner
Chicago, Ill.
Via email

My heart went out to Alyson. I had the same problems with my

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Sociology & Anthropology Washington, DC 20059
Howard University (202) 806-9357
rferrell@howard.edu

twin girls when they were born. I had every intention of breastfeeding and pumping for the first six months. I had my girls by C-section at 36 weeks following pre-eclampsia. One twin was in the NICU at a hospital 120 miles from our home; the other twin was able to be with me in the room and go home with no NICU-time. I started out breastfeeding exclusively with Kate—my milk was slow to come in. I pumped for Caroline (the twin in NICU), froze the milk and took it to her. She was given formula mixed with breastmilk. After the first week of trying to recover from C-section and the stress of having a preemie in NICU, my milk wasn't coming in well. My blood pressure continued to rise and I was put on medication.

I talked with several lactation consultants but was still getting inadequate milk. I had to start supplementing with formula. Caroline came home after 17 days. After talking with my husband and praying over our decision, I stopped breastfeeding and switched to formula. It was one of the hardest decisions I ever had to make.

I felt as if I let my daughters down and felt a lot of guilt. Everything I read pushed breast over formula. As a woman it was so hard to acknowledge I could not make enough milk to feed my girls. They are a year old now and I still feel guilt over it, even though they are very healthy and got at least some breastmilk. My choice for formula was not an easy one. Thank you for publishing Alyson's letter—it's good to know there are other mothers out there who went through the same thing.

Sundee Braley
Texarkana, Ark.
Via email

I too have always wondered if I let my 21-month-old boys down by not being able to breastfeed! Reading this brought back so many memories and feelings. I was unable to breastfeed my sons. I tried and tried but simply did not produce enough milk. I realize I did all I could physically and mentally do at the time. My sons were delivered via c-section at 34½ weeks because I had preeclampsia. I suspect the health problems that go along with preeclampsia and taking magnesium sulfate coupled with the stress of having preemie twins in NICU (one on a ventilator) worked against me. We also had to teach our sons how to suck and swallow. For the entire time my sons were hospitalized, I tried to breastfeed.

I probably only produced a few ounces of milk the entire time, after hours of torturous pumping and squeezing and trying to get the babies to latch on. I pumped all the time and went to feedings every three hours around the clock. (I was able to stay at the hospital but changed rooms often, always taking the breast pump with me—I didn't care about my personal belongings as long as the breast pump was there.) The lactation consultant was wonderful and tried to help. I used the hospital-grade double pump and swore formula would never touch my babies' lips.

When my healthier twin began losing weight and had an NG tube inserted, I realized I'd have to allow NICU to supplement with formula—and found out they already were without asking me. My

continued on page 10



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Dr. William Sears
Author and child care specialist



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other son was on a vent for five days and I tried to pump for him so they could feed him my milk via NG tube. Looking back, I think the NICU had so many twins at the time that they grew tired of fooling with me trying so hard to breastfeed, and after many 20- or 30-minute sessions of my healthier son not latching on properly, they were ready for me to leave. At times, all of them were shoving my breast into his mouth and everyone was examining me.

I wish now I had demanded to stay longer and try more, but some nurses convinced me I needed my rest and that my healthier son needed his rest, too. So they would just supplement for me. Then one nurse told me the babies would probably have to stay in the hospital longer unless I produced more milk. That generated even more stress! The NICU nurses also gave my babies pacifiers before I was ever able to hold them.

I am not trying to badmouth the nurses—they were very good to me and my babies and provided excellent care, which is most important. But I do think if they had encouraged me more and had allowed me to stay in the unit longer and not added to my stress of not having much milk I would have been able to breastfeed. The regular OB floor nurses did not like being bothered to put what little milk I did express into their freezer and at times would look at me like I was stupid when they saw how little I produced. Couldn't they have said something encouraging? After my husband had to go back to work, it was hard to walk down the hall many times to sterilize the equipment each time in the dishwasher at the hospital, but I still tried. I took Reglan to increase my milk supply and endured the side effects; I tried herbs; I did all the things lactation consultants and neonatologists recommended. But my milk dried up.

At least my boys got my colostrum. So, to Alyson and all the other moms who were unable to breastfeed but tried, I say, "At least we tried. That makes us good mothers, for caring!" I say to the general public, please don't be so hard on mothers unable to breastfeed—many of us tried!

LeAnn B.
Tennessee
Via email

Alyson wrote about concern she was letting her twins down by not being able to breastfeed. I was in a similar situation when my twins were born Nov., 2006. My husband and I were completely committed to breastfeeding our son and daughter. Imagine our surprise when my milk did not come in. We worked with a wonderful lactation consultant and did everything we could to coax my milk to come in, but it just would not. I was able to pump enough milk to give them a bottle or two each day for their first month of life, but it was so much work to get so little. I was pumping each time we fed them and as soon as I stopped pumping during the 2 a.m. feeding, my supply diminished even more. With sorrow, I stopped pumping on their 4-week birthday.

My lactation consultant felt that my lack of milk could be related to the progesterone I took during my early pregnancy, part of

my IVF protocol. I was frustrated and disappointed at first, feeling that my body let me (and us) down again. But after listening to my little girl scream because she was so hungry was worse than not being able to breastfeed. I gave them what I could and now as I watch them crawl and smile and babble, I know the nourishment my husband and I have given them through love and hugs is just what they needed.

Is breastmilk best? Sure, and I believe we should give it 100% effort. But if it doesn't work or if you aren't the mom your babies need you to be because of the stress it causes, it is better to give them formula and move on. No need to feel guilty about not breastfeeding—just let them know you love them and are so glad to have them. That's what will help them grow big and strong.

Rachel Smith, proud mom to Thomas & Taylor
Columbia, Md.
Via email

The overwhelming sadness of PPD

I'm so glad to know someone else experienced the same feelings I did after having my twins two years ago (Sept./Oct., 2007). Like Lisa, I also was a teacher and had a Master's degree. I too could barely diaper and feed my two babies. I was very overwhelmed and was so depressed. I cried just looking at them. I'm sad to say I did not enjoy the first few months of my twins' lives. I was on autopilot. I just fed, changed diapers, held them and cried.

I look back and miss those few months of bliss most parents have when their new baby comes home. Watching my mother enjoy the twins helped me see what I was supposed to be doing. I learned how to take pleasure in caring for my new babies, instead of being distressed. After four months, I started smiling again (and sleeping). Now they are 2. I taught them to talk, recognize letters and numbers, sing songs, and use the potty! Back then I felt like a horrible mother, but now I know I'm doing just great! I love these boys and treasure each and every moment with them.

Amanda Kurzeja
Hainesville, Ill.
Via email

See 13 additional letters and toss us your 2 cents' worth!

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Could this get any worse?

By Mark Kennedy

If you think Chevy Chase and the Griswolds had a tough time on their (fictional, movie) travels, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Although raising twins (or more) is hard slogging, traveling with toddler twins can be even harder.

I've seen plenty of articles that led me to believe taking twins on the road would be easy. And that I could handle it. Now I know: it's not, and I can't.

Our journey seemed do-able. It entailed (only) a three-hour trek to the mountains from our home outside Philadelphia with our twin daughters, Madison and Maggie, just shy of 2 at the time. Getting to our destination wasn't just half the battle—it was all of it.

Where should I start? Troubles with directions, tantrums, lack of fuel, stomach flu, no diapers or wipes, guilt, angst, tow trucks, summer heat, bad cell phone connections, swampy grasslands, traffic jams, stress? I felt as if I was on the SS Minnow where Gilligan's three-hour tour turned into a lifetime.

My parents were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in the mountains with their 24 children and grandchildren in attendance.

My wife and I dreaded the drive with Madison and Maggie, who are great kids but weren't inclined to sit quietly for a long trip.

We pleasantly acquiesced and said we'd join the whole tribe for the party. Wrong decision. We should have backed out. Said whatever it took. A white lie. Excuses. Anything to avoid a three-hour road trip with 2-year-olds.

The whole packing scene doesn't need describing. Veteran parents of multiples are pros at this. One smidgeon of advice: If your twins aren't yet potty-trained, take a ton of diapers and wipes. Forget any other items. Not these.

The kids were strapped in, hatch

locked, and we had directions to the lodge. One quick pit stop for soft pretzels, and we hit the road.

Mistake #1:

Once you get going, don't stop. Get everything you need beforehand—directions, gas, soft pretzels.

"Mommy! Mommy!"

"Mommy will be right back, girls. She's just getting some pretzels."

"Mommy! Mommy back! No pwetzel! Mommy back!"

Mistake #2:

We planned the trip around their naptimes, normally 1:30 to 4:00 every afternoon. We aimed to leave by 1:00, but

four of us had survived bouts of stomach flu. Mommy was last, sick the entire night before leaving on our mountain trek. Apparently she had passed the baton back to Maggie.

"Blech!"

Someone just dumped a bucket of water on our back seat, I thought.

"Mark, pull over. Maggie just got sick."

We were stuck in traffic and about to turn onto a major highway.

"Blech!"

"Mark, she's not done. You have to pull over."

"I'm trying!"

In desperation, I angled toward the narrow shoulder of the on-ramp, probably the most dangerous spot I could find. I pulled into the high reeds bordering the roadway so my wife and I could safely emerge.

"Are you okay, Maggie?"

"Blech!"

Poor Maggie wasn't crying. Our little trooper.

The smell was overwhelming and the sound of puking woke her sister, who began crying. Screaming bloody murder, to be exact.

"Uppy! Uppy! Out! Out! Mommy! Uppy!"

We begged Madison to calm down and wait for a second, but she was furious. Tantrum mode. Her nap was disturbed and disaster struck.

It was a hot day in June. My wife rolled down the windows to let the smell escape, with the car running so the air conditioner would continue its work.

The reeds along the sides of the road had always seemed harmless enough, but I learned that day they're not a place where you want to spend your leisure time. I wasn't sure exactly what I was standing on. Goosh. Goosh. It turned out to be very swampy ground. Muck.



Cameron and Bennett, 4 months

didn't pull away until 2:30. Result: two toddlers over-tired and cranky.

Their crying lasted another 10 minutes after mommy returned. Not a good time for dad, in heavy traffic.

The late start messed up plans to avoid rush-hour traffic, turning the anticipated three-hour tour into four. Doomed from the start. But Maggie and Madison quickly fell asleep. An hour into our trek all was quiet. The calm before the storm.

When we hit the first traffic light after exiting the turnpike, the shaving cream hit the fan. Maggie awoke immediately when we stopped.

The tummy bug had made its way through our house the previous week. All

My shoes became soaked with...I don't know what. Unloading our bags from the back hatch was a must. Piling them on the ground was out of the question. I piled everything on the car roof. Luggage, golf bag, strollers.

Maggie slacked off for a moment, allowing us to unbuckle our sick baby. Mommy changed Maggie while I did my

Maggie's eyes grew wide when she saw a huge tow-truck pull off the road and approach us from the rear. I tried to wave him away by yelling that we were okay, but he couldn't hear or understand me.

"Mark, is someone there?" my wife asked in a panic.

"Yes. A tow-truck."

"Please, get rid of him! I can't let him see me!"

Before the guy could exit his truck, I got him to roll down his window. I told him

we didn't have any car trouble and my daughter had thrown up. It worked. He left.

I can only imagine what passers-by were seeing. Car on side of road, baby in hatch, doors all open, luggage on top, man standing in deep reeds looking lost and defeated. What a mess.

We cleaned the car as best we could and managed to get moving again a half-hour later. I felt worse for Maggie than for myself, sitting in her stinking car seat, wrapped in a fake diaper and a t-shirt.

Madison, on the other hand, was working a nerve. She took a few breaks but most of the time she wailed.

Could this get any worse? Yes.

As I cautiously merged back into heavy traffic on the busy on-ramp, Maggie suffered another episode. How much could her little stomach possibly hold?, we wondered, as I pulled to the side yet again. Car running, Madison wanting nothing more than to escape the car, Maggie puking, mommy and daddy cleaning. At least this time we had pulled into a parking lot.

Twenty minutes and we were on our way a third time.

At what point do we turn around?, Christine and I asked each other. My daughter and wife were sick, but we know

this party is a big deal and my whole family will be there. They've been planning this for a long time. Too late for any refund on the lodge. A surprise family portrait appointment had been planned for my parents. Getting the whole family together was a rarity. Guilt surfaced.

We pushed on.

Mistake #4:

When I had pulled over the second time I lost my bearings. By the time we realized we were lost, we were a long way from the road we should have been traveling.

Could this get any worse? Yes.

The good news was that the girls calmed down and once again fell asleep. The bad news was we were well and truly lost. We figured we were at least heading in the right direction (north), but who knew for sure? We called the lodge for help. (Yes, I am a guy but I did ask for directions. Desperate times.)

"Please hold," the receptionist said. I held. Then I lost my cell signal. I waited and called back.

"Please hold." I held. I lost the signal again. I called back, again.

"Please hold." The receptionist sounded annoyed. So was I.

"Can I help you?" a friendly voice finally asked. I talked as fast as I could. (Coming from Philly, that's pretty fast.) She tried to help, but had no idea where I was. I lost my cell signal again. I called back a third time.

"Please hold." I held. Finally I reached my friend. "I think I know where you are. Keep going on the road you're on until you find Route 6. Head nor..." Lost the signal. I hoped she meant north. I didn't call back.

Many extra miles plus a lot of extra time with the car running while stopped meant the gas gauge was approaching Empty. I hadn't seen a gas station for a long time and really didn't want to stop anyway. I hoped we would make it. It would be close. Maybe one thing



6 MILES

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best to clean rivers of vomit off the car seat. Madison was screeching.

Could this get any worse?, I wondered. Yes.

Mistake #3:

"Mark."

"What is it, honey?"

"We forgot the diapers and wipes."

"No!"

My wife did her best to clean our daughter using bottled water (Thank God we did stop for pretzels and drinks!) and my favorite t-shirt. She was tempted to re-use the same diaper—after all, it wasn't really that wet—but instead made a makeshift diaper out of my second favorite t-shirt.

Could this get any worse?, I wondered. Yes.

I was in the middle of wiping down the car seat with my wife's favorite t-shirt when Christine called to me.

"Mark!"

"What?"

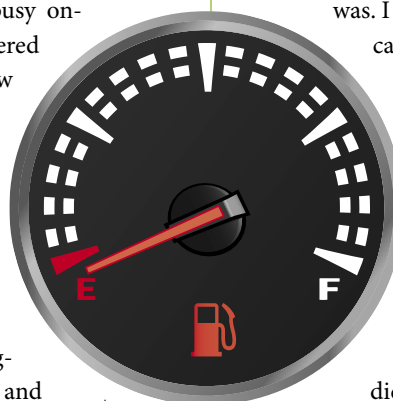
"I'm going to be sick."

"You're going to throw up?"

"No, worse. Watch Maggie."

My wife opened the passenger door, blocking the view of oncoming traffic, and went about her ghastly business. Poor Maggie was sitting in the hatch wearing nothing but a jury-rigged diaper, mesmerized by the goings-on. Madison continued wailing.

Could this get any worse? Yes.



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would go our way today.

We found Route 6. And waited forever in a long line of traffic to turn left at the only light in town during the peak of rush hour, to head north. The kids woke up.

Maggie gagged, but didn't throw up. One for the good guys. Madison was unhappy to still be in the car. I didn't blame her. It had been almost four hours since leaving home, with no end in sight. Suddenly we saw a sign for the lodge: Only six miles to go.

We begged Madison to hold on for six miles. The fuel tank light flashed, signaling Empty. I sped up, Mario Andretti flying along winding mountain roads hoping not to make Maggie throw up.

My wife nearly got motion sickness herself. I hoped my car wouldn't throw up and use more gas.

We used every trick in the book to distract Madison. Songs, peek-a-boo, pretzels. Nothing worked.

Six miles came and went. We were confused. Where was this place?

We spotted another sign for the lodge: Take the next right, go four miles.

They had lied to us. Did anyone know the serious consequences of teasing us this way? I hoped I could handle the next four miles. I did.

Another sign. Another turn, another five miles. Anger was an understatement. Only Madison was expressing how I felt.

Five miles was the last leg. Was there enough gas in my reserve tank? Could these hills get any steeper?

We made it, barely. I've never been so happy to see a parking lot in my entire life. Two days later, I was sad to leave it. The weekend fun and the smiles on the girls' little faces made the trip seem almost worth it...almost.

Yes, I was glad I came. It didn't get worse, it got better.

Mark Kennedy, 34, lives in Philadelphia's suburbs with his wife, Christine, and his twin daughters, 3. He's an equity options trader on the Philadelphia Stock Exchange (PHLX) and has his MBA in Finance.

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Having twins after two singletons suddenly drives a wedge between old friends

By Jennifer Koch

We live in the very small town of St. Paul, Oregon. I have never been much interested in sharing my twin stories with others simply because I never really thought of them as much of a story.

But recently, I had a revelation that a major event had occurred in our lives that was worth sharing.

At the time our twin daughters were born, we had a 4-year-old and a 1-year-old, both boys. My husband and I were 34 at the time and all of our friends were

the evening I tried to carry on conversations or simply listen to a conversation without running off in search of my little ones. During one conversation, my girlfriends were discussing what a tough week they'd had and how they helped each other out by watching children for each other so they could grocery shop. (Did I mention their children are ages 4-7, with each having only two?)

I found it very interesting (and honestly quite disturbing!) that I myself have shopped with my twins and my 3-year-old many times, often picking up things for my friends while at the store. And my week probably was twice as bad as

theirs, which explains why my face displays evidence of stress 85%

of the time.

After hearing enough of their pity-party, I simply walked away, thinking, "They really don't understand my life and aren't about to help me out when I need it."

Only a short time later, I left the party feeling very out of the circle. Friends we'd had since we all got married 10 years ago suddenly didn't feel like friends any more. I felt I had no one except my husband. I told him how I felt and he quickly understood.

A few weeks later I ran into these same old friends at another function and explained why I'd been avoiding them recently. I simply told them I'd had a hard time listening to talk about how hard they had it, and seeing them shake their heads in amazement at me, yet never getting a phone call or offer to help me out.

They quickly put me in my place, telling me I had been very rude at that last party because I wouldn't make eye contact with any of them, then ran off in the middle of conversations, and left early. I was literally dumbfounded.

Not long after that, I shared my story with a couple much younger than we are but who also have twins, and they just laughed, knowingly. They said, "Eye contact? What's eye contact when you have two toddlers wandering off in two different directions? If people can't get that ... wow!"

So my husband and I made our decision. We would quietly slip away from our daily contact with old friends and would seek out new friends with whom we'd have much more in common. Yes, our new friends are much younger than we are, but they have twins or singleton little ones the same ages as our girls.

It seems if you don't have toddlers in your life, you forget what it was like. And if you only have two children, you just don't understand what's happening with us.

My twin experience has not only been life changing, it has brought about friend-changing, too.

Having our twins has changed our lives in more than the usual ways. We are closer as a family, simply because getting out isn't an easy option anymore. Our social circle may have shrunk a little but I know it's not forever.

Our luxuries have changed from wanting newer homes and newer cars to enjoying the overwhelming sounds of laughter and little voices throughout our crowded little home.

I'm still friends with the people in this story. It's just that they no longer make up my sole support group as they did before. And now I'm very aware, too, that the days may be long but the years are short!

around the same age. They, too, had two children and knew that would be plenty. Hence, when our twins were born—a great surprise to us as well as to our friends—we became the oddball parents. Friends just shook their heads and expressed amazement.

I can't honestly tell you how many times I heard the phrases, "How are you going to do this?" and "There is no way I would be able to do this."

Our beautiful daughters just turned 2 in September, and we have managed quite well, thank you. Other than the fact we basically lost all of our friends.

Only recently my husband and I realized that "They just don't get it..." and never will—the trials and hardships, yet complete and utter joy we have experienced with our brood of four.

One Friday evening at a friend's house, I showed up with my four children, the girls just starting to walk, and my little 3-year-old who loved to wander. During

Jennifer Koch, 37, and her husband, Todd, just celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary. And now they're back to celebrating life with their four kids, Rawley 6; Clancy 3; Gracie and Stella, 2.

Skateboarding twin brothers, 9, are flying high

Tristan and Nic Puehse are 9-year-old skateboarding twin phenoms who've become major stars on YouTube—an action-video showing off their skills and tricks in eight months has become the “most-viewed skateboarding video of all time,” with more than 3 million views, according to their dad, Michael. (http://youtube.com/watch?v=8X2_zsnPkg8) The DZ/fraternal twins live in Shingle Springs, Calif., and began “skating” right after turning 6, quickly turning into fearless competitors and entering the California Amateur Skateboard League in the 8-and-under division. In May, 2004, they won 1st Place and Best Trick (Tristan) and 2nd Place (Nic) in their very first competition. In August, 2004, still only 6, they moved up to the 10-and-under division. Their own personal website is at www.skateboardingtwins.com. The duo typically skates three or four days a week, probably about 12 hours total, says dad. “They have a good balance in their lives. It’s not all about skateboarding,” he told TWINS™.

They’re homeschooled, and though they love skateboarding, they don’t “eat, sleep and breathe it every waking moment,” Michael adds. Tristan and Nic became hooked on skateboarding when they went to check out a new skatepark that opened near their home. They had begun wakeboarding when they were 5, and caught on quickly. Do mom and dad worry themselves sick watching Tristan and Nic fly upside down and inside out on skateboards? “Not so much anymore,” Michael said. “Early on, they used to take

quite a few big slams, but they’ve since come into their own and are good at knowing how to fall, as well as how to minimize the slams.” Tristan and Nic already have an impressive string of sponsors with whom they’ve signed contracts: Powell Skateboards, Bones Swiss, Nike, Sony, Gatorade, Autobahn. And they’ve co-starred in a movie with Ed Begley and Cindy Williams.



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Parenting challenges with twins: When one child is gifted

By Amy Stuart Taylor

I found out I was expecting twins at 12 weeks when I began bleeding. I feared I was losing the baby, but by the end of the day I'd discovered I was actually having two babies. A benign blood clot caused the bleeding.

Because my twins were discovered early with a barely-visible membrane between them, the doctor was quite certain they were identical. The mystique surrounding identical twins flooded my life. I wondered what it would be like to have two babies exactly alike.

My illusions were shattered early. Even before birth, one twin quickly gained prominence in growth and activity. I learned identical twins who share a placenta are actually at increased risk for mismatched growth. One often thrives at the expense of the other because of twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS).

Our boys arrived at 33 weeks: Wesley weighed 4 lbs.2 oz., and William weighed 3 lbs.11oz. Wesley quickly developed into a plump and noisy baby. William didn't fare as well. By age 2, he'd undergone three major surgeries to close a hole in his heart and repair a congenital intestinal condition called Hirsch-Sprung disease (when nerve cells don't develop fully in the colon).

Strikingly different children, different needs

Even later, William lagged in energy and growth. Finally, at age 4, we discovered he was chronically anemic due to Celiac disease, an autoimmune response to gluten (it damages the intestines and leads to nutritional deficiencies). A gluten-free diet transformed William's health. Now, at 7, he's the same impressive height and weight as his brother.

Yet they remain strikingly different children. In ways not altogether clear to us, different experiences from conception on have shaped their personalities and aptitudes. Wesley was a precocious learner, talker, and reader. He galloped ahead. William needed urging. Nothing came as easily to William, although he developed persistence and a fervent desire not to be left behind.

Today, William is a strong student who is succeeding in a structured classroom. He is challenged and growing at school.

Unfortunately, Wesley is another story. Our school district



doesn't offer so-called "pull-out" gifted instruction. ("Pull out" special services involve a child leaving the regular classroom in order to participate in supplemental education. Some states mandate this type of gifted programming—others, like Indiana, don't.)

What's more, we live in a university town with plentiful parent advocates, and it's clear the school district is afraid to open the floodgates. I

requested that Wesley be placed in a multi-age split class (2nd/3rd), as recommended by his first-grade teacher. Instead, he was placed in a classroom with an older teacher who is kind but appears unwilling to offer him additional academic opportunities. He and I have waited for more challenging work to come along, but it hasn't happened.

I felt guilty at first because I didn't advocate for Wesley's appropriate class placement beforehand. I didn't want to be viewed as one of "those" parents who harp on teachers and administrators as if their child was the only one who matters. But without my acting as a squeaky wheel, my son has been left to grow bored much too early in his life.

I was troubled by something else, too. I struggled with the issue—and the dynamics that would result—of openly differentiating between my twins' intellectual gifts. I'll readily acknowledge one prefers sports over art, but how could I admit one has superior intellectual gifts? That hasn't come so easily.

Reasonable expectations

I finally decided my sons simply have different needs. I advocated for William's health needs when he was a baby; now I must advocate for Wesley's learning needs. My pretending the boys are the same isn't serving—or fooling—anyone.

Through Internet research, I discovered the school corporation has a committee for gifted-and-talented instruction, headed up by the principal of my sons' elementary school. I decided to offer to serve on that committee. I also made appointments to observe in Wesley's classroom and speak with the teacher and principal about my concerns.

Parent advocates of gifted children often wonder if they

are being unreasonable. Or they worry they will be perceived as bragging or overblowing their child's abilities. Shouldn't we just be glad our kids don't struggle in school? Why do we expect even more—assistance, mentoring, challenge, and stimulation—for a child who already has so much?

But a child with ability and skills well above the norm has special needs, as does a child who is learning at a rate well below the norm.

School may become boring for these kids—and that can be dangerous. Gifted learners, like other children, have a right to a “free and appropriate” education, too.

Here are some baseline expectations:

- All children learn new information and skills in school. That's education.
- Curriculum is appropriate—neither too hard nor too easy. Teachers should be trained in “differentiated instruction” rather than relying on “pull-out” classes to meet all special needs. (I've learned from educators all teachers should be trained to meet a wide spectrum of needs, and “differentiated education” is a good term to throw out when talking to educators!)
- Schools offer enrichment opportunities, as well as options such as grade-skipping or attending some classes with a different grade.
- Students are not punished for learning more quickly and with more enthusiasm than their peers. (My son and I were chastised by his teacher when he selected a book from the library that the class was reading together, and read it on his own. That's wrong.)

Concerned-parent advocacy

I've learned a lot from this challenging school year. Here are some suggestions I would offer any parent of a gifted child:

- Research state policies to learn what funds are available and how your school meets the needs of gifted students. States vary widely in policy and practice.
- Call your school district, ask to speak to the person in charge of gifted education. Ask if you can serve as a parent or community representative on any committees for gifted / talented education.
- Talk with the school principal in the spring about your children's placement for the coming (next) year. Ask for a teacher with expertise in accelerated-learning needs and a willingness to collaborate with parents. Make it clear you plan to be an involved parent. Don't wait. Schools rarely move children to a different class after the school year starts.
- If concerns arise, talk to your child's teacher first. I went over my son's teacher's head—to the principal—in the hope my son might be moved to a different classroom. He wasn't and I put the teacher on the defensive.
- Ask that your child be tested for giftedness by the school. If your school does not offer gifted education, have your child tested outside and present results to the school. Ask that they be included in his or her cumulative folder along with a

Online resources for parents of gifted children:

- www.nagc.org/ —National Association for Gifted Children
- www.nfgcc.org/ —National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children
- www.cfge.wm.edu/ —Center for Gifted Education
- www.hoagiesgifted.org/ —Hoagies' Gifted Education

letter requesting appropriate teacher and class placement. Ask for a school conference to address your child's special needs.

- Make sure classroom goals set for your child are enrichment goals, rather than suggestions that he or she accommodate an inadequate system. Goals for my son included, “Help him learn to accept/deal with the learning process.” And, “Help him to accept losing sometimes.” These are not appropriate learning goals.
- Be persistent. Stay professional and pleasant, but don't give up. Squeaky wheels do get attention in the schools—eventually.
- Volunteer to help—within reason. Don't create programs on your own that the school can't sustain.
- Mobilize other concerned parents. Form your own committee and action plan and take your concerns to the superintendent or school board.
- Consider other schooling options.

Home support for gifted learners

As my children complete their third year of public school, I have mixed emotions. Overall, our experience has been positive. I feel as if the school has been willing to work with me, but efforts are stymied by limited time and resources. Little, if any, actual change has come about. Gifted education is not a state or local priority.

I'm not giving up. But I have accepted that what I do at home is as critical to my children's learning and development as before they started school. We read books together, go to the library, take field trips, do research, and spend lots of time talking and playing together. I continue to “scaffold” their learning based on my own instincts and knowledge of my children. In other words, I use each experience and learned skill as a building block for the next learning adventure. I no longer expect elementary school to provide much more than additional practice and rehearsal for my gifted son. It's up to me to give him what he needs.

I think the situation would be better in a state that mandated

“Help! Is there any way I can possibly make

Colic is a true medical and scientific conundrum, says Jerome Groopman, MD, writing in the Sept. 17, 2007, issue of *The New Yorker*. Colic affects apparently healthy babies, is characterized by frequent, inconsolable squalling, is triggered by unknown causes and has no known cures or effective treatments.

Parents of twins know this, experiencing as they do even more colic with their twin infants than parents of singletons seem to endure, and sometimes for longer periods. About 25% of all babies go through a period when there is some inconsolable crying; the incidence may be even higher in twins (multiples) because of more premature births. Uncontrollable, inconsolable, unstoppable howling in stereo with twins or triplets lasting weeks or months is enough to drive even unflappably calm parents over the brink.

Dr. Groopman leads off his long arti-

cle about colic in *The New Yorker* (“Crybabies: Solving the colic conundrum”) with the tale of a Manhattan-based psychiatrist, 41 years old, who gave birth to healthy twin girls in September, 2006.

In an attempt to head off colic “attacks” in her twins after dealing with serious colic in her older singleton-daughter, this MD-mom optimistically tried to prevent what lay ahead—she eliminated all the suspected “culprit” foods; gave her twins Mylicon to break up gas bubbles, Zantac to block acid in their immature systems, and chamomile tea to calm them; burped both babies frequently and held them upright after nursing to stave off reflux; placed them on their backs at night with wedge-pillows to help with digestion; and followed advice of leading authors of books about dealing with difficult infants.

In spite of her efforts, both of her twin infants began frequent, inconsolable

crying at 3 weeks of age and continued for six months. She was unable to quiet them, no matter what she did, and it nearly drove her and her husband berserk.

The long and short of it: If this medically-educated, well-prepared mom couldn't prevent (or treat, or “cure”) her twin infants' screaming-meemies, how can other parents of twin infants be expected to do any better? Or even half as well? Truth is, they can't.

As Dr. Groopman pointed out in his exceptional article, no one really knows what causes colic in babies, and there are no known ways to effectively prevent, treat, or cure colic. Dr. Groopman, a renowned physician who frequently writes the outstanding “Annals of Medicine” features in *The New Yorker*, holds the Dina and Raphael Recanati Chair of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and is Chief of Experimental Medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. He has served

Parenting Challenges...continued from page 17

gifted programming and a school district that recognized the needs of these students. We will examine these factors more closely when (and if) we move again.

Explaining to twins why they're so different from each other

When one child is gifted, there is the chance to celebrate differences. There are also confusing questions to answer. I know a woman with boy/girl twins who bumped her daughter up a grade when they started school because of differences in ability and maturity. With my identical twins, I didn't consider that

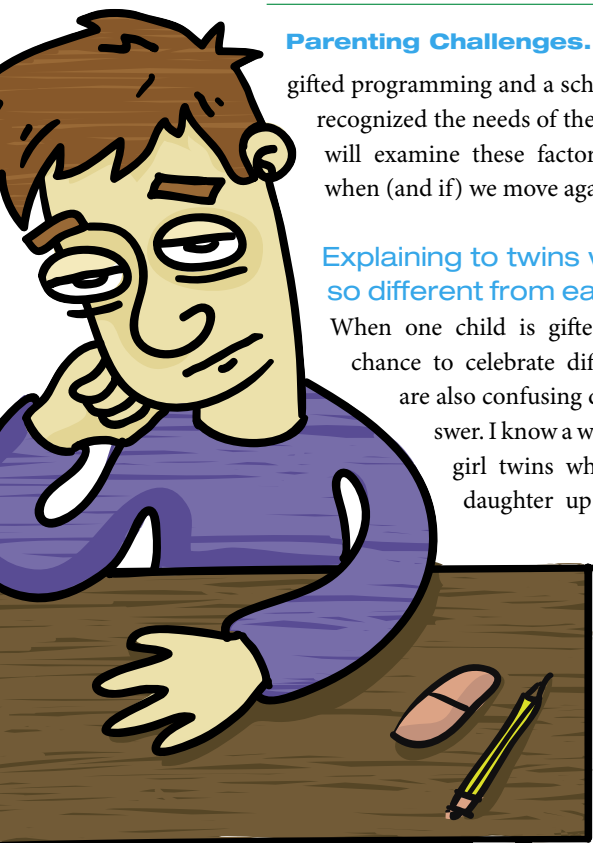
made on a case-by-case basis.

I know some people disagree with me on this, but I feel twins especially need reassurance they are individuals, free to pursue unique lives. So, I have chosen separate classrooms for my sons. I go over their report cards with them individually. I encourage them to pursue different activities and interests. I tell them they are different people with different strengths. But people still mix them up. And competition still reigns.

Yet, I believe parents must advocate for children when something doesn't feel right. One child shouldn't have to accommodate the other in every aspect of life just because they're twins. They are more than a matched set, regardless of genetic origin. We must do everything we can to support each child's healthy development.

This article has focused on my own experience with my gifted son who has accelerated reasoning ability and academic skills. Many other areas of “giftedness” also have been identified. Check out Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to learn more (“Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons”; “The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach.”) I believe the same principles of advocacy apply to other areas of giftedness, as well.

Amy Stuart Taylor, PhD, is a writer and parenting advocate with a doctorate in School Psychology. She has worked in schools in Colorado, Florida, Maryland, and Indiana. She lives in West Lafayette, Ind., with husband, James, and identical twin sons, Wesley and William (born Jan. 11, 1999).



an option. Besides, I wasn't anxious to push Wesley into a more socially-mature environment. Choices like these really have to be

my colicky, crybaby twin infants shut up?"

with the FDA, the National Academy of Sciences (National Institutes of Health), and has conducted seminal research on cancer, AIDS, neurobiology and genetics.

There is no agreement about what colic is or what causes it, Dr. Groopman wrote. A physical cause for colic can be identified, said Dr. Groopman, in fewer than 1% of cases. Medical resources have very little to say about colic. Studies have shown colic occurs with regularity in virtually all cultures and societies where the so-called "variables" are different from those in developed societies like ours. Hence, constant mother-baby contact, different eating patterns, different breastfeeding patterns, different birthing patterns and different levels of nutrition don't account for or eliminate the incidence or duration of colic. Colic was first described in a British medical treatise in 1544.

The only thing anyone knows for sure is infants eventually outgrow colic.

In the past, Dr. Groopman pointed out, pediatricians assumed colic is harmless. Yet some medical experts and researchers have found persistent colic can affect the relationship between parent(s) and babies.

Barry Lester, PhD, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Brown University's medical school, and director of the colic clinic at the Brown Center for the Study of Children at Risk, regards colic as a behavioral disorder that afflicts the whole family, according to Dr. Groopman's article. "At the center, we look at how colic is affecting not just the baby but the parent-infant relationship. The crying will stop, but the relationship risks becoming disordered, and this can have a lasting effect on the child," said Dr. Lester.

One researcher quoted by Dr. Groopman stated that more than 90% of all cases of shaken-baby syndrome—where a parent chokes and shakes an infant so vigor-

ously as to cause trauma that results in a hospital admission—are caused by crying.

Dr. Groopman says there is "little evidence that physical maneuvers can soothe a colicky infant" and debunks the myths that have grown up around numerous potions and remedies to treat colic, ranging from so-called gripe water (devised in the mid-1800s in England to treat a malarial outbreak), recordings of a mother's heartbeat, mattress vibration devices, vacuum cleaner sounds, car rides, hot water bottles, swaddling, swinging, colic-dancing, and special massage-like touches.

Dr. Lester believes it's critical for moms to teach their babies to self-soothe and self-regulate. It's also vital for mothers to avoid feeling helpless, incapable and guilty, feelings that can cause the mother-baby relationship to spiral downward.

(For more, go to http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/09/17/070917fa_fact_groopman)



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The twins have landed

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 landed on the moon and the human race accomplished its single greatest technological achievement of all time. Never before had a human being set foot on another celestial body.

Neil Armstrong's small step and mankind's giant leap did not go unheeded by the 11-year-old I was then. My 5th-grade studies in science had piqued my interest in America's space program, and there was no way I could let drooping eyelids steal this historic moment. I stayed up way past my summer bedtime. This was a landmark event I would one day describe to my kids and grandkids: I witnessed via satellite the first moon landing and man's first walk on the moon.

Yet, I was still two years away from starting the cycle that would, 30 years hence, produce an egg that would split and land identical twin boys on the face of the earth in the wee hours of July 20, 1999.

Like most kids, I was fascinated by the idea of twins. Whenever Sis and I played House, my imaginary brood always included one or two sets of twins. When the two of us and my brother played

the boardgame "Life", I loved landing on the spaces that allowed me to fill my car with blue and pink pegs; nothing did that quicker than the twin-boy space.

One grandmother had given birth to nine children, the other eight. Not a multiple birth in the bunch. If twins were in my future, they should have been in my past, in one or more of the 17 total births of my grandmothers, wouldn't you think?.

My husband's ancestry was similarly twinless, and we had not a clue getting pregnant a second time would give our 3-year-old daughter a sibling-plus-one. The clincher, as it is for many twin moms today, was my age. I was 40 when I convinced my husband Mike it was now or never if we were to keep our daughter from having a lifelong case of only-child syndrome.

Mike remained unconvinced. But I also wanted to prove to myself that I could do the whole baby- and toddler-care thing better than I had done it before, when I had suffered from chronic fatigue much of that time.

I'd been out of work on disability as a result, but being home hadn't allowed me to take care of my baby daughter. Some days I couldn't get out of bed, and I begged my husband to take our toddler to my mother while he worked. That was scary. I worried about traumatizing my daughter by distancing myself.

But that was all in my past, and I was ready to make it up to her now with a brother or sister to love, as well as Mom and Dad.

Getting pregnant proved to be as easy as the first time. After my home pregnancy test showed up positive, I was off to my midwife, who did an internal exam.

"How far along did you say you were?" she puzzled.

"Seven weeks, I think."

"It's more like 11 weeks, by the size of

the uterus."

Now I was puzzled. I was sure I hadn't miscalculated. "What else could it be?" I asked out loud. "Twins?"

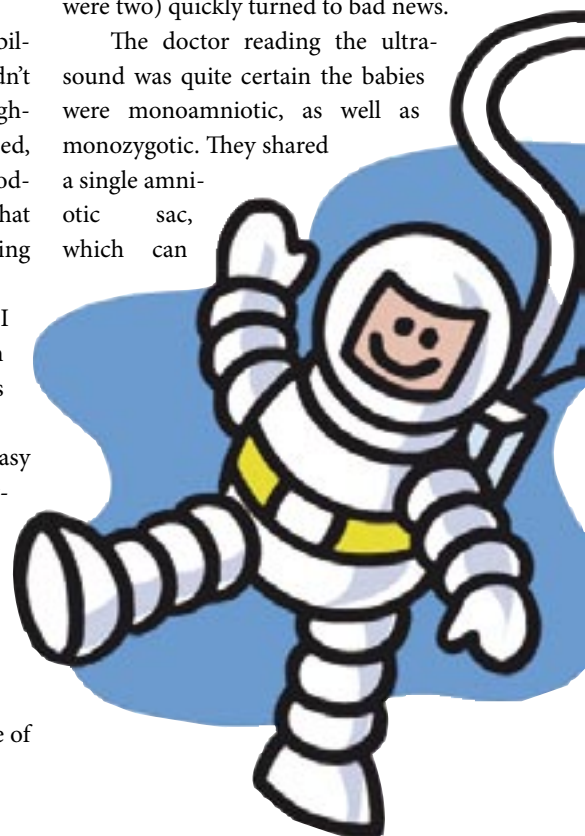
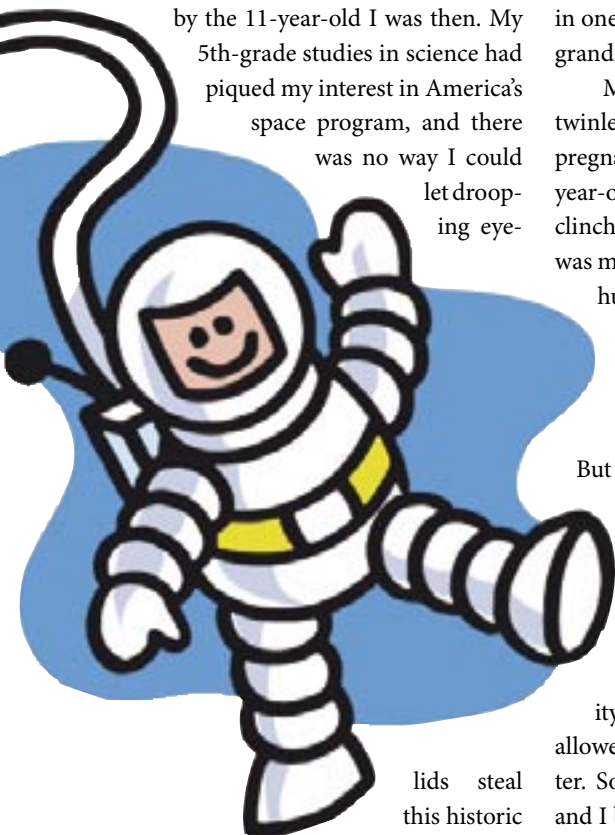
She chuckled. "You said it, not me." But I had plucked the word off her tongue.

She suggested I bring Mike along for an ultrasound without telling him about the possibility of twins. But who could I tell? I hadn't needed an ultrasound during my first pregnancy. Mike was sure to wonder why I was having one now. No, I was bursting with the news, and had to tell him.

For the next three days I found myself silently hoping, even praying, I was carrying twins. During my first pregnancy, my midwife had compared a baby in its mother's womb to an astronaut floating about in a spaceship, no gravity, just floating, bouncing off the walls. Now, I thought, two astro-babies are inside me, floating. It was a wonderful thought.

Mike was overwhelmed by the idea of twins, and I was glad I had prepped him. Especially when our good news (yes, there were two) quickly turned to bad news.

The doctor reading the ultrasound was quite certain the babies were monoamniotic, as well as monozygotic. They shared a single amniotic sac, which can



result in twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome. All I heard was the danger: At least one, maybe both babies, could be lost during pregnancy or at birth.

The ultrasound didn't appear to show a line between the babies that would indicate each was in its own sac. Might it simply be too early to see it?, we wondered. The doctor gingerly avoided eliminating our optimism, but wanted to avoid offering us false hope.

We received this news only a few weeks before Christmas. I focused on making the season bright for our daughter. We kept our pregnancy a secret until after the next ultrasound.

Mike found an online support group that helped us learn more about the probable outcomes, which were as bleak as we'd been warned. It seemed surreal telling complete strangers of our possible plight baring our souls online.

I began to fear real medical complica-

tions for the lives inside me as well as my own life. I was reminded how dangerous childbirth was in times past, and still is in some countries of the world. Were my babies bouncing off their own walls or bouncing off each other in the same compartment of their little space shuttle?

We saw a different physician at the second ultrasound, at which we were able to detect the line—that most beautiful line!—showing each baby in its own sac. Whew! We could finally tell family, friends, our daughter, the whole world: I was pregnant with twins!

The rest of my pregnancy was relatively uneventful, except for monthly—then weekly—ultrasounds, coupled with stress tests. One night in February, I went to the hospital with stomach pains—another ultrasound.

“Holy cow!” the doctor said. “Oops, do you know the sex?”

We did by then. Boys. Guess they

were showing off their stuff.

With our daughter we had not known her gender until she was born. This time around, we wanted to know right away, figuring anything that allowed us to be more prepared was a good thing.

We couldn't imagine raising anything but girls. Our daughter wanted sisters. We told her that with brothers, she would forever remain the princess and wouldn't have to share her toys (Not true, but what did we know?)

The boys continued to grow inside the command module. From the front, I looked huge; from the side, I looked like a bus. Total strangers asked if I was expecting twins. It was fun at first, but I preferred staying home after a while. I grew tired of the questions and knew people were nervous seeing me, fearing I might drop the babies then and there.

My little spacemen were in tight quarters now, with no room to float or bounce.

continued on page 22



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They managed to kick and flail their arms with sweeping motions I could see crossing my grossly expanded belly. They likely punched each other a few times, too. Ouch!

My due date was about a month after my daughter's birthday. I knew any time after 36 weeks is good, with twins.

Relatives attending my daughter's birthday party took turns guessing when I would deliver—no one guessed I would carry the boys until one day before my due date.

Two days before my due date, I had my weekly ultrasound and stress test, a familiar routine. Caring for two babies following delivery could hardly be any more work than this, I thought. Ha! Little did I know.

The babies were estimated at about 6 pounds each. No contractions. Doctors debated what to do with me. They scheduled me to come in four days later if nothing had happened by then.

I ate a good dinner, and I remember it included broccoli. A half-hour later, my stomach hurt, but nothing felt even remotely like a contraction. Mike was at a meeting nearby. I called my mother to avoid bothering him.

"I had broccoli for dinner," I said to

Mom. "Do you think that's why my stomach hurts?" I was clearly in denial that I was full-term with twins.

"You should call your doctor about getting to the hospital," she stated, nervous but firm.

I waited to see if the pain started feeling more like a contraction. My first experience with labor had been long and drawn out. Within the hour, however, I alerted Mike to come home, called my sister to pick up my daughter at the neighbor's house, threw my bag into the car, took my daughter hurriedly to the neighbor's, and was beside Mike speeding to the hospital.

Labor was quick. Two babies rocketed forth in about one-tenth the time it took to have their sister, four hours after arriving at the hospital. Naturally, at that—no drugs or epidural—a boy followed 12 minutes later by his identical twin.

In the recovery room, I heard an intercom voice announcing "Baby Boy A weighs 7 lbs. 10 oz." Mike and I were stunned. Baby A must certainly be the larger of the two! "Baby Boy B is 8 pounds." We were in shock.

The moment my boys exited Spaceship Mom, they rocked their world, changing our family dynamic forever.

They and their sister have grown to be best buddies, fiercest rivals, and everything else brothers and sisters are to each other. Dad experiences more joy in his career and getting out of the house in the morning, especially after a wakeful night with one or more cranky offspring.

As for the space shuttle, let's just say if anyone in our family needs a skin graft, I'm here for them.

The twins have landed. With a resounding thud.

Deborah A. Ein, Hammonton, NJ, is a SAHM who spent 20-plus years on the editorial staffs of four monthly magazines, including *New Jersey Outdoors* and *American Forests*. In 2004, she co-authored a book, *Birthdaze: Stories For Moms*, available for purchase at online booksellers and through her website, www.writermomz.com. Her twin sons, Garrison William and Wesley Michael, are 7. Deb writes children's books between shuttling kids here and there.

TWinfo

When Bemis Manufacturing Co., maker of EasyClean toilet seats among other bathroom accoutrements and plastic products, announced last June the creation of a Busiest Moms Contest, mothers of twins and their families sprang into action.

Bemis's Top 50 semifinalists from among about a thousand nominees, many of whom were moms of twins, included nine moms of twins. The Top 20 finalists included four mothers of multiples who submitted essays of their own or were nominated by family or friends.

The contest wrapped up in early October. Grand Prize winner: Robin Kirton of Murray, Utah, mother of six (single-ton) children 2 to 13 years, all diagnosed as autistic. Robin receives a package valued at more than \$11,000, including a year's worth of maid and chef services and new toilet seats for all of her home's bathrooms.

Finalists also receive Bemis's EasyClean toilet seats for their entire homes. Mothers of twins who were finalists included Nanette Ladiero of Poway, Calif., a single mom of four boys nominated by her twin son, Cameron Salazar; Siobhan Healy of Gwynn Oak, Md., who has 13 children, including three sets of twins, 6, 2 and 2, nominated by her husband, Christopher; Glenda Thomas of Casper, Wyo., with four children under 4 including 9-month-old twin boys, nominated by her husband, Mike; and Lisa Gliever of Roseville, Calif., a 44-year-old mom of six, including 2-year-old identical twin boys.

To read nominating essays for the 20 finalists, go to www.bemismfg.com/busymom/



Merrily, Merrily, Merrily: Growing up with triplet brothers

By Jonathan Shipley

“Don was a biter.” This, from Jim and Lance recently. “In a fight he’d do anything—hair pulling, biting, you name it.”

Not that my triplet brothers fought a lot as kids. They didn’t. But it’s fun to know that the biter turned out to be a minister.

Don, Jim and Lance are my triplet brothers. I’ve got another brother, and a sister, too, but everyone is always intrigued by the fact that I shared a house and my formative years with a genetic aberration.

Jim, now a graphic designer, says, “The best thing about being a triplet is the novelty of it...people’s reaction. The worse thing? Ditto.”

“Do they look alike? If one of them gets hurt do the others feel it?” I was always asked. And if I got questioned about it constantly, there’s no telling how inundated with questions they were.

Let’s break out the plusses and minuses of growing up with triplet brothers, shall we?

+ If you get into a tussle at school, you can say, “I have three older brothers, so back off!”

— They were as threatening as warm kittens. Don was a buck-toothed kid with a perm. Lance, a melon-headed Mensa boy. Jim, a bespeckled shrimp whose biggest claim to fame in our family was going down a very steep hill in a wagon without brakes, injuring himself badly at the bottom of said hill.

+ It was easy to play doubles tennis with them.

— They are very unathletic. Sure, Jim and I played on the church softball team (right field), but they were eggheads, not jockheads. Just witness the results of our annual Shipley Olympics as proof. (Sorry, dad, about that errant lawn dart toss...)

+ I got oodles of hand-me-down clothes.

— We wore velour, corduroy, vinyl.

+ I had my own room, while they had to share a room all through high school.

— They had so darn much fun together.

+ Musical quartets were a snap with me and the three.

— They’re all atrocious musicians. I remember, jarringly, the time when all three were playing instruments in their room (yes, they all shared a room, through high school). The discordant cacophony of drums (Don), violin (Lance) and flute (Jim)—with me on trombone—sounded like an injured wal-

rus during rut.

+ More family members meant more Christmas gifts for me!

— We drew names for gift-giving because there were so many of us. I don’t recall any specific gifts I received from my brothers, but one Christmas Eve night I do remember a spirited game of “Butt Tag.”

+ More people with whom to play car games on long summer road trips.

— Cheaters, all of them. We’d be playing the alphabet game. I’d be winning handily, up to, say, the letter R, when they’d change the rules!

+ When in trouble with Dad, I could point my finger at many.

— Dad could sniff out a liar. If not, he’d sit us on that old brown sofa until one of us fessed up.

+ If the trio didn’t like what they were eating, I could pick food off their plates.

— There was no food. After school, ravenously hungry, we’d scavenge for anything at all to eat in the cupboards. I’d go for the Bisquick. Lance and Don, Saltine crackers. Jim, “Those silver BB things you sprinkle on frosted cupcakes.”

+ Homework help from guys smarter than I.

— They knew they were smarter and more talented, and let me know it. Lance, now a school counselor, used words like “dichotomy” at around age 5. Don, the minister, was spiritually enlightened. Jim, the artist, could draw logos of major league baseball teams better than me even if blindfolded and with hands tied.

+ Having loving brothers.

— Can’t think of one.

Jim, Don, and Lance, my older triplet brothers. We’re all in our 30s now but can’t help, when together, recalling our early days with Mom, Dad, our older brother and sister, living in a little rambler in Olympia, Washington, eating nothing but oatmeal for breakfast and spaghetti for dinner. I won’t touch oatmeal now, and the spaghetti had better be mighty tasty if it’s going on my plate.

Jonathan Shipley’s writing has appeared in The LA Times, Boston Globe, and other newspapers; magazines including Lexus, Coffee House Digest; and on Web sites such as Venuszine and McSweeney’s. Jonathan is author of a humorous novel published as an e-book through Literary Road, and a humorous play, “Deviled Eggs,” produced at the Blue Heron Theater.

The co-twin of a special-needs child: Trying to prevent the less-needy child from getting lost in the shuffle

By John Wood, MD

There are times when the brother or sister of a special-needs child is simply lost in the shuffle of the family's constant need to provide all the things the special-needs child has to have. When the children involved are identical twins, that's doubly true.

In our case, it's Benjamin we fear might get lost in the shuffle. Ben was the recipient twin in the boys' TTTS relationship during pregnancy. Born just shy of 30 weeks, Ben weighed 2 pounds at birth and spent seven weeks in the NICU.

Unlike Peter, his brother, Ben has had no complications from TTTS and is neurologically normal. As I've mentioned in earlier writings, Peter was brain-injured and is slow to learn. Developmentally, Ben has met all his milestones. Both he and his brother make us proud.

At age 3, it's impossible for Benny (as he calls himself) to understand what happened to him and his brother during pregnancy and at birth. He knows that Peter

seems to get more attention, gets to take some sweet-tasting stuff in a syringe every morning, and sometimes gets to take trips alone with his mother or dad. Peter also has his own special equipment to use that Ben doesn't have—a "standing table" into which we fasten Peter when he eats meals, a "corner chair," a "crawler." Ben knows, too, that therapists who evaluate them seem more interested in Peter than in him.

Last week, Benjamin was at the dinner table when he asked his mother, "Momma, why are you giving Peter medicine?" Kim answered, "Because Peter needs it for his body." "It helps Peter to crawl," Ben added. "We hope so," Kim responded. "So Peter can walk?" Ben quickly asked. "We hope so," his mom answered. Then Ben said, "Mommy and Daddy are working on it." "That is right, Ben," Kim answered with a smile.

Ben's needs are often overshadowed by the more pressing needs of his brother. This becomes a fact of life in families like ours. For example, Peter can't feed himself, but Ben can; Peter

can't walk, so he needs to be carried everywhere. The result is that Peter seems to get more attention from his parents. He certainly is held a lot more.

If Ben perceives that he's being shortchanged, this can potentially have a detrimental effect on him. The brother or sister of a special-needs child may grow up feeling less loved or valued when older, may be more prone to depression, may feel guilt or resentment, and may feel strong pressure to become an overachiever. What's more, the "normal" child may worry and fret about the future of his or her special-needs sibling.

On the flipside, having a special-needs co-twin can also affect children in wonderful, healthy ways. Children who grow up alongside special-needs siblings may be more mature than their peers, show more tolerance towards others, develop stronger loyalty to their family and the sibling, and have deeper appreciation for people of all abilities.

We think a lot about all of these issues, good and bad. And we are constantly seeking "the right way" to raise our boys so both are happy, healthy, fulfilled and whole-people.

Several months ago, my wife Kim and I found out about Sibshops, gathering places started many years ago for siblings of special-needs kids. We attended one day of a two-day workshop designed for parents and grandparents of special-needs children and met Don Meyer, the founder of Sibshops, who led the workshop. He's been doing this for more than 20 years and was great.

Meyer stressed the critical importance of understanding that a sibling bond is for most of us the longest bond we will have in our lives. Yet it often goes unrecognized by caregivers, physicians, school sys-



One of the very first Sibshops at the Experimental Education Unit, University of Washington.

tems, and others.

For us, as parents, Meyer said it's important to:

- Focus on abilities, not disabilities.
- Acknowledge feelings—all types of feelings, both good and bad.
- Resist comparisons between children.
- Avoid casting our children in roles (e.g., caretaking).
- Spend one-on-one time with the unaffected sibling.

Meyer's organization also runs Sibshops around the country for the special-needs siblings. Sibshops' regular meetings for special needs siblings sound like fun, and give kids a chance to share with other children their feelings about life in general and about their own specific family life.

Our community doesn't have a Sibshop, but we discovered opportunities to attend training workshops. We may work on having a Sibshop started here in Duluth because we think Ben would enjoy it and benefit tremendously.

We know it's important that Ben be allowed to become "who" is he is, unfettered. It's our hope that he will roam the world and be a leader, but that he'll also always remember that Peter is next to him even if he isn't visible or physically present. We don't want Ben to feel he is a caretaker. That's a lot to put on a child, and a lot to bring into the job of parenting.

Kim and I are trying to build bridges for our boys, enabling them to actively share in each other's lives and experiences, while knowing their perceptions and experiences will differ greatly. We know they'll operate in somewhat separate orbits, but we want to make it possible for them to interact, as well. For example, we'll say, "Look at Peter," as Peter is laughing at something we are doing

together. As a family, we do things together. We try to mirror an attitude towards Peter that focuses on his strengths and is inclusive. I am enrolling our family at the Chester Bowl Ski hill, a small place about a mile from our house. That's an example of how we are trying to have a shared, but different experience.

Yikes! Who ever thought?

Resources:

- www.siblingsupport.org
- Siblings Without Rivalry*, by Dendra Timmons Schubert, PhD.
- Living With a Brother/Sister with Special Needs: A Book For Siblings*, by Don Meyer and Patricia Vadasy

Diagnosis of a special-needs child

By John Wood, MD

My wife and I first learned our son Peter would most likely have significant neurological problems the afternoon following his birth. An ultrasound of Peter's brain done in the NICU confirmed what perinatologists already suspected: Peter had periventricular leukomalacia, or PVL.

PVL is characterized by cysts or dead areas of tissue in the white matter of the brain. Peter's were pretty extensive, we were told. As a result, Peter would probably have cerebral palsy,

may need a feeding tube, and may have a seizure disorder. This was all secondary to his TTTS, causing a lack of blood flow to Peter's brain during a crucial time for the brain's development, in the period of 24 to 26 weeks.

For any parent who receives such news, time stops. All of our dreams and hopes, our "normal" expectations, are suddenly replaced by something unknown. It's almost too much to understand at first. Questions arise, but are often unanswerable. One feels alone and protective of one's child.

In our case, the diagnosis of probable cerebral palsy was made very quickly because of the anatomic abnormalities seen on Peter's ultrasound. In other cases of special needs children, the diagnosis may be more difficult and take longer. Parents may have

months or years of suspicions that things aren't right, and their child may undergo multiple medical procedures and consults before a diagnosis is made.

CP and autism can be especially difficult diagnoses. These are also the most common childhood neurological disorders. The symptoms with which the child "presents" are often subtle. CP is characterized by motor impairment that causes movement and postural disorders.

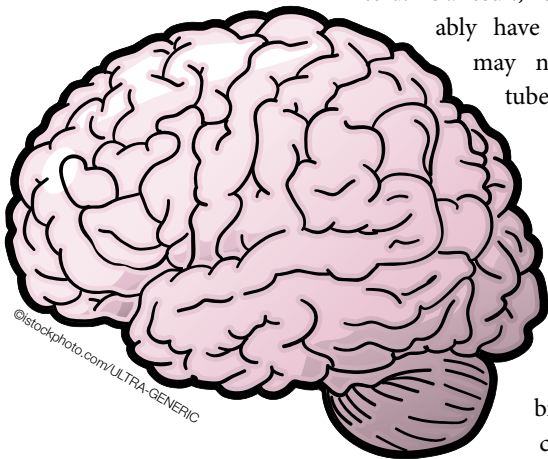
Studies have shown that of children diagnosed with CP at 7 years of age, only 23% had an abnormal neurologic exam as a newborn. On the flipside of that, about 50% of children diagnosed with CP at 1 year did not receive that same diagnosis when they were 7.

Similarly, autism is a so-called clinical diagnosis that often—but not always—becomes apparent by 1 year, and, like CP, may involve a number of subtle, uncharacteristic presentations.

Diagnosing honest-to-goodness conditions like CP or autism is a tough problem for medical practitioners. Clinicians want to avoid over-diagnosing these conditions, especially because they know that a diagnosis made too early may be inaccurate. On the other hand, health care workers don't want to miss anything, particularly when proper intervention undertaken early can make a big difference in a child's life.

Once the diagnosis is made, ongoing support is very important. This involves more than just consulting with the physician who made the diagnosis. My wife and I see Peter's rehabilitation doctor once every three-to-six months; we visit his pediatric orthopedist and neurologist once a year. Because I am available to Peter as a parent and a physician, our particular family has come to rely less on physicians and more on Peter's occupational therapists and physical therapists. They see our son on a regular basis and provide us with useful answers.

John Wood, MD, is a board-certified Family Physician working in a small town in Northern Minnesota. He will be writing frequent articles about dealing as a family with a twin who has special needs. Many TWINS™ subscribers have responded with letters and calls about topics for discussion, which Dr. Wood will address in forthcoming issues. Send questions and comments to twins.editor@businesswird.com.



Undiagnosed TTTS almost caused a disaster

By Jennifer Miller

Editor's note: Jennifer's story should serve as a warning to expectant moms awaiting their twins who just might have similar things going on with their bodies. Her experience should alert all of us that we often need to ask a lot more questions of our physicians, and should avoid ever just "taking our doctor's word for it" that what we're experiencing is "really nothing, just go home and rest." In hindsight, this physician's oversights and blasé attitude would make any reasonable person furious.

I happened to be browsing the TWINS™ website not long ago and saw a mention of stories about TTTS in your "Special Miracles" section. I thought I'd send mine because it's so instructive for other expectant parents.

My case of TTTS went undiagnosed—but, fortunately, it does have a happy ending. When I was exactly 29 weeks along, I went to the hospital thinking my water had broken. At the hospital,



Jennifer Miller's miracle babies, Josie and Anna, at 10 days old.

the doctor on duty told me my water hadn't broken, but I was dilated 1 cm and should go on bedrest... although not the strictest of bed rests. I was allowed to walk around a little bit, as well as sit at my computer for short periods. I returned home and did my best to follow instructions. But all the while, fluid continued to leak. The doctor had said the babies were probably just pushing on my bladder, causing urine to leak out. The fluid really didn't appear to be urine, but the babies did like to kickbox my bladder, so I went along with the theory.

Ten days later I began feeling some lower back pain while sitting at my computer. I figured I'd just been out of bed too long and decided to go lie down. My husband has just come home from work and offered to make dinner. Meanwhile, the pain in my back continued to worsen and I started feeling a weird kind of pressure, for lack of a better description. I didn't think the pressure could be contractions, because I had a notion that contractions would feel like my whole abdomen was seizing up. Finally my husband noticed something was wrong and asked if I wanted to go to the hospital. I said, "No, no.... yeah."

By the time we arrived at the hospital, I had begun to tremble. At first, I figured I was just anxious about possibly being in labor this early. Later, when I was finally led into an exam room (the same one I'd been in 10 days earlier, as a matter of fact) and had gone into the bathroom to gather a urine sample, I began to shake uncontrollably. Giving urine samples is tough under the best of circumstances, but with a giant belly and the shakes? I got it done, but it took a long time. After that, however, things got blurry...

Some minutes afterwards, I learned I had developed a 102-degree fever. A hundred people suddenly seemed to be zooming in and out of my tiny exam room. The OB on call told me my water had indeed been broken for (probably) several days and an infection had set in. Though the babies were in the right position for a vaginal delivery, an immediate C-section was recommended because of the infection.

Things became really hazy after that... the effects of fever, contractions, and IV drugs. Our babies arrived at 10:06 and 10:07 p.m., respectively. I knew nothing that was going happening at the time (and I'm glad now I didn't), but while Josie (Baby A) was doing okay (considering how premature she was), Anna (Baby B) scored zero on her initial APGAR test and was put on a ventilator to get her breathing.

A good thing they came when they did

I was wheeled to recovery, where my fever broke almost immediately. I was actually feeling quite good at the time, even though I was starting to feel the first pangs of having a not-so-normal birth experience. I saw another new mom wheeled in, and watched as she visited with her baby.

Just as drugs and exhaustion really kicked in, two doctors arrived to discuss the babies' conditions, speaking in very grave voices. I could barely hold my eyes open... I could only hope my husband could explain it to me later, because it seemed important.

The recovery process was hard, but went pretty smoothly. Josie was also doing pretty well, although she had to have iron supplements after coming home and was diagnosed with a heart murmur. (After further tests it looks like something most likely to fix itself with time.) Anna was on the ventilator for a couple of days and then on a machine called a Bubble-CPAP for a few additional days. The CPAP was less invasive than the ventilator, but actually looked worse. Josie also had to be "under the lights" for a few days because of jaundice, which turned her skin very, very red.

The doctors explained to us that Anna had been getting more of the placental blood and nourishment inside the womb—twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, which had gone undiagnosed. At



Josie and Anna, 2 years old, celebrating Easter

birth, Josie weighed only 2 lbs. 12 oz., while Anna weighed 3 lbs. 15 oz. A sonogram performed 3½ weeks before I gave birth identified that Anna was at least a few ounces heavier than Josie, but the difference was thought to be within normal ranges. During those final weeks of my pregnancy, however, I actually noticed that the right side of my belly (Anna's side) had become visibly larger than the other side... I felt lopsided. At the time, I figured it was just the way Anna was laying. Turns out, though, that while Josie gained only about 6 ounces during those last 3½ weeks, Anna gained about a pound and a half.

I'm not particularly happy that my TTTS went undiagnosed (not to mention my water breaking), but fortunately everything turned out okay. Anna and Josie each had to spend a month in the hospital, but they are doing great now. I think it was actually a good thing they were born when they were because my next sonogram had been scheduled for three days after I actually gave birth. It probably would have shown clearly how much Anna had grown, and how little Josie had. The longer they had stayed in there, without treatment, the worse it could've been for them. As it was, I think they survived without any real lasting consequences because the TTTS didn't develop until that last month or so of my pregnancy.

The size difference between Anna and Josie as newborns made them appear very different from each other in those early months. As a result, I assumed they were fraternal. However, while reading up on TTTS, its causes and treatments, I learned the condition only affects identical MO-MO twins (monozygotic, monoamniotic). Now that their weights are starting to even out, it's becoming much harder to tell them apart.

Jennifer Miller lives with her husband and 2-year-old twin daughters in Cockeysville, Maryland. Because Jennifer was born on Christmas Day, 1974, she was constantly asked what it was like to be a Christmas-baby. That prepared her for the task of answering the constant twinnery-questions over and over as a mom of twins. She's a freelance web designer (her girls have their own website at twoprincesses.com); her husband is a technical support supervisor for a major communications company.

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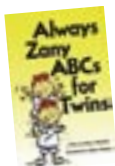
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Twins-squared: It doesn't get any easier

By Jill Young

Lucky, blessed, busy, tired. These are just a few of the things people call us when they hear we have two sets of twins. And we definitely feel all of these, and more, with our twins.

We knew there was a possibility of having a second set of twins when I got pregnant the second time. There are 14 sets of twins in six generations of my family (including my twins). This is one of those

are double the challenges and double the pleasures with twins—in our case, twice.

The best part about having two sets of twins is watching my children interact with each other. Seth and Grant always look out for Nicolas and Tyler and stick up for them. Seth and Grant chase Nicolas and Tyler around the house, sing to them, play hide-and-seek with them and entertain them to give me a few moments for dinner prep. All four twins

have that special bond with each other and even the twin talk.

It's nice knowing my boys have an automatic playmate, and learn how to share right off the bat. I like having all boys—we have plenty

of clothes and toys to

use a second time around. Having four same-sex children makes the twin thing easier for us, I think.

Two sets of twins can be very exciting, but there are times when life is so crazy or exasperating—or both—you can't do anything but laugh. Such as when you're changing a poopy diaper on baby 1 and baby 2 comes and takes the poopy diaper, sits down and chews on the diaper and plays with the "special chocolates" inside. Meanwhile, the older twins are pulling every toy out of their toy box and scattering them across the bedroom.

I especially remember the time when I was feeding my 8-month-old twins in their high chairs while they scream unrelentingly because they're tired and don't like the food I've chosen for their meal. In the meantime,

my older twins had been outside playing in the sprinkler and ran into the house wearing their swimming trunks and a nice layer of mud from head to toe. Yes, there are times when crying won't help—only laughter will do.

The hardest thing for me about having twins is finding time to spend with each boy individually. When Nicolas and Tyler came along, we were always busy feeding, bathing and changing them and just couldn't find much time to spend with Seth and Grant. Trying to help two 1st-graders with homework and whatever else they're involved in and then chasing after two little ones (who most often run in different directions) keeps us on our toes.

Keeping twins in the same classroom can be a challenge or a blessing. Seth and Grant were in the same kindergarten class, but are now separated as 1st-graders. This is better for them but it was a difficult decision to make. The same arrangement may or may not work with Nicolas and Tyler, but it will be an easier decision for us because we've already experienced it.

Tailor changes to personalities

When my husband and I first learned we were having a second set of twins, our main concern was how to afford it financially. We didn't worry about how we would feed or bathe two babies at a time, or even change 20 diapers a day—we'd already done it. We did, however, rethink how we'd handled things with Seth and Grant to determine if these were the best ways or even the easiest ways to take care of twins.

Dave and I must have done a pretty good job the first time around, because we haven't made very many changes. Bedtime and bathtime rituals have remained unchanged for all the kids. We believe in putting our boys to bed early, allowing alone-time for Dave and me. We always gave each twin an individual bath until each boy was at least a year old, which allowed us alone-time with each boy. After that, to save time, we have



Jill Young's boys: Tyler, Seth, Nicolas and Grant

things you read happens to someone else but never think could happen to you. The only other person in my family to have two sets of twins was my great-great-grandmother, who had 14 kids.

My husband, Dave, and I discussed the idea of having more children when our first set was about 4. Knowing that we had a 65% to 75% chance of having another set of twins, we decided to brave it.

With our second pregnancy, we were in preparation mode. We already knew what we needed to do to get ready: A bigger vehicle, and I would have to quit my job for bedrest at 28 weeks (as I'd done with the first pregnancy). We'd already been through this before; we knew exactly what to do.

We may have plenty of experience, but it still wasn't (and isn't) any easier. There

them take baths together.

The few things that we do differently now are because of the boys' personalities. We spend more time with Nicolas and Tyler (who are monozygotic/identical) than we did with Seth and Grant (who are dizygotic/fraternal) during their first year, probably because Nicolas and Tyler are more interactive with Dave and me and want us to read to them, play with them and dance with them. They also take off in different directions, climb on furniture and get into everything—which Seth and Grant didn't do so much—so we spend a lot of time trying to keep them from getting into trouble or getting hurt. Seth and Grant loved spending time with each other so much that they didn't care if anyone else was nearby or playing with them. They were inseparable and did everything together until about a year ago. Surprisingly, they didn't like to be read to, and they liked and disliked a lot of the same things. They definitely didn't get into everything like Nicolas and Tyler do.

Despite two difficult pregnancies, four premature births, many sleepless nights and



The Ferary family in Marietta, Georgia, also has double-doubles, both sets MZ/identical: Angelina and Isabella, 4, and Joseph and Giovanni, 18 months.

breastfeeding two at a time—twice over, I think it's great being a mother of twins. ♥

Jill Young is a stay-at-home mom in Liberty, Mo., whose twin sons Seth and Grant are 7; Nicolas and Tyler just turned 2. Jill worked as a hotel catering manager before having Seth and Grant, and returned to work when they were 2. She now sells Mary Kay Cosmetics from home, but finds she hasn't much time for her sales business because toddlers Nicolas and Tyler keep her running.

Correction

An item entitled "Twins are truly two in a million" (May/June, 2007, In the News, p. 7) by Sonya Judd contained several misstatements. Sheridan Children's Healthcare is a neonatal group at Plano Medical Center, Plano, Tex. Ms. Judd did not personally interview Dr. Lawrence Tenzer, as the story inferred.



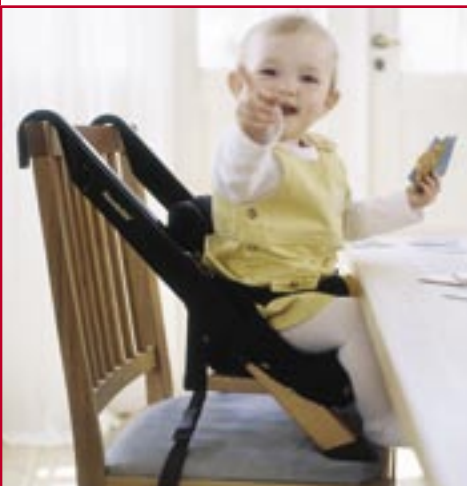
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Mom of twins launches national toy rental plan based on Netflix's "subscription model"

Imagine not ever having to endure the psychic overload and stress of strolling merchandise-packed aisles in mammoth discount stores or Toys R Us to select the right playthings for your twins.

Imagine not having to figure out what toys are age-appropriate and "best" for your twins as they grow.

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Imagine not having to spend two or three times as much money on toys as you need to, because you get to try them out first, before purchasing.

Are you hooked yet? Lori Pope hopes so...because her new company will do all your legwork and brain-work for you, to make "The Great Toy Adventure" fun instead of nerve-wracking.

Lori is certain she's created the perfect program for moms and dads of twins. She should know...she is one. Lori's a Houston-based mom of 1-year-old twin boys, and CEO of newly-launched BabyPlays.com,

an online subscription toy-rental company whose program closely resembles the business-model popularized by the highly-successful Netflix for its online movie rental business.

Lori, owner of a successful oil-field supply company, had MZ/identical twin boys at age 40 (she's been married 20+ years and has two older sons, 17 and 18), and wanted an easy way to find high-quality, stimulating toys for young children. But she didn't have time to spend hours researching and shopping for toys. She sought a service that would satisfy her need, and finding none, developed the idea for BabyPlays.com. Lori also saw that her babies became bored quite quickly with the toys they had, so she wanted a way to expose them to more variety without spending thousands of dollars each month.

The company now owns a warehouse stocked with a wide (and growing) selection of over 150 different toys for infants/toddlers from birth to age 4, across 13 different categories. Ultimately, BabyPlays.com's selection will include 250 different toys for birth-to-4, plus another 250 toys for 5-to-10-year-olds.

BabyPlays.com offers families three different rental plans: 6 toys a month for \$35.99/mo.; 4 toys a month for \$28.99/mo. (3-month minimum commitment, cancelable at any time, charged on customer's credit card one month at a time, auto-renewing for 3-month periods until active cancellation, ability to queue up online for desirable toys as they become available); or 6 toys a month (with a 12-month upfront commitment) for \$31.99/mo.

"I've experienced what it means to be a concerned parent who wants her young children to have adequately stimulating toys. I want families to be able to experience new things, and to be able to choose to choose and try out specialized



toys.
With
BabyPlays.com,

families get to experience 72 unique toys in a year's time," says Lori. That's more toys than any one family would normally buy in a year. And at a cost of less than \$385 a year (an average "price" of only \$5.35 per toy), parents get to see which toys their babies and toddlers like the best, and toys their kids don't really respond to, they can return to BabyPlays.com after a month's trial. Like Netflix, all shipping of toys to customers and return shipping costs are free (paid by BabyPlays.com).

If a toy breaks, a customer notifies BabyPlays.com, ships it back and receives a replacement or a different toy, depending on their preference—providing it's had "normal" use.

"We ship all toys cleaned, sanitized, tested, fully assembled, with batteries installed—if they use batteries—and ready to go. We require that all of our toys meet all U.S. safety standards and manufacturing standards, and we make



sure our manufacturers and vendors have ISO procedures in place and are adhering to them," says Lori.

"BabyPlays.com is particularly interested in what we call highly-interactive toys that are especially good for parents who are involved with their children, because we want to encourage this

interaction of parents with babies with toys," she adds.

After 30 days of use, parents send back to BabyPlays.com some or all of their toys, and order a new batch for the next round. If the family wants to keep and purchase a toy that the children especially like, the toy's price is the suggested retail price (SRP) less 20%. (If the family wants to purchase a toy, but wants a brand-new one instead of the "used" model, they pay exactly the same SRP less 20%, but they'll pay the shipping cost from BabyPlays.com to the family's address.

BabyPlays.com's current customer base consists of many local Houstonites who've been beta-testing the service, including a number of grandparents who think this services is the best thing since sliced bread, because they can give a one-year BabyPlays.com subscription to their kids and grandkids as a gift, knowing that the toys will always be items the kids really want, things mom and dad have selected and approve of, and will be used and appreciated.

"Our customers write back to us that

they are giddy with delight about this program," says Lori. Her goal is to have 2,500 subscriber-customers by early 2008, and 10,000 by the end of 2008. These are lofty targets, but seem reasonable for a lady who built a \$7 million-a-year oilfield supply business in only a couple of years.

Lori Pope is the eldest of nine children whose parents were missionaries. She lived a nomadic life growing up, residing in everything from huts to small houses to shacks or even tents in small villages all over the U.S. and Mexico. Lori and her eight siblings were home-schooled and Lori turned out to be highly entrepreneurial, starting her first business shortly after attending college for a year and dropping out to do something more exciting. She started her oilfield supply business with about \$8,000 of family savings, which alarmed her husband at the time (he's also from a large family and grew up in Michigan).



Lori Pope with her 1-year old twins Evan and Ethan.

On Lori's drawing board is an expansion of BabyPlays.com into the "big toy rental" business, enabling parents to pay a fixed monthly fee to rent jumpers, swings, exersaucers, push toys and other "play" items that typically cost \$75 or more at retail. She envisions requiring no minimum commitments for these—rentals will be month-to-month. (Lori doesn't anticipate offering cribs, high-chairs or other "basic" equipment.) ♡

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Triple-tasking gives multi-tasking a whole new meaning!

By Xenia Schiller

Parents of multiple birth children learn quickly the regular rules of family life don't apply. It often seems as if you've wandered into some alien universe where inhabitants speak a foreign language in unison, and finish each other's sentences.

As one-third of our family's set of identical triplet girls, I've spoken that special tongue, finished that sibling's sentence and united my voice with two others to express one thought. This special bond is daunting to others who, most likely, did not have a womb-mate, much less two. But what I want to share with you is that our mother, a single parent, had some time-tested techniques she used when feeling overwhelmed. They have become her own special DO's and DON'Ts of raising multiples.

DO know that with the awesome responsibility come unexpected, built-in benefits. For example, if two or more children are of one gender, they have instantly and effortlessly expanded their wardrobes. (Remind them to ask their sibling(s) before helping themselves to the others' clothes, however. Things get hairy if the proper "authorization to borrow" is not obtained from the would-be lender. Special penalties might apply.)

Our mother would say her favorite "built-in" was the ability to work deals. She turned our triplet-dom to advantage, netting a special 3-for-the-price-of-1 tuition deal at our private school, and 3-for-the-price-of-2 with our orthodontist. Our pediatric dentist offered to do our work for free, provided he could document our

case in a research paper. Mom was delighted. Certain restaurants always discounted our tabs, and sympathetic store clerks (usually women) slipped my mother coupons while she shopped. As a parent of multiples, you should quickly master the fine art of negotiation.


DO embrace the Law of Rotation. Let "Rotation, Rotation, Rotation" be your battle cry, your best friend and mightiest weapon in the arsenal of parenting techniques. My mother discovered this power

when she realized she lacked the time to settle our daily debates. If harnessed correctly, The Law will govern most of your household activities—including sleeping arrangements, privileges, even chore assignments.

When your children are old enough and large enough to safely travel in the front passenger seat, be prepared to employ The Law. No seat is like the front seat; it offers prestige, stereo-access and a fully-disappearing window. Inform your kids they will need to devise a schedule for its occupancy. My sisters and I organized our shotgun-rider rotation by day-parts—we reveled in the power of creating our shifts. Natasha preferred the morning drive, Allie the after-school, and I especially loved the evening ride. This schedule can be broken into days or weeks, or even based on merit, depending on the needs and/or numbers of your family.

Our mother had such success with the Law of Rotation that she employed it in deciding who "owned" our home's third bedroom. Every six months, a sister moved out and went to the shared bedroom while a new resident got settled into "the room." We knew the individual loner-bedroom was a special privilege that could be revoked, and behaved (in our opinions) accordingly.













DO know that the multiple-bond is resilient. While your children will be blessed with always having a friend their own age (i.e., in their same grade) they might not always want to acknowledge each other's existence. Don't worry, infighting is normal and they will always be each other's greatest allies. As identicals, we sometimes worried a sister would bring embarrassment upon us while she walked around with our face—only a single in reality, but representative of three. Each of us felt pressure to honor



The TTTS Race for Hope National Event Series is wonderful fun for the whole family that raises awareness about Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) and other fetal syndromes. Thousands of pregnancies are affected by fetal syndromes each year, and over half of those babies could have been saved with something as simple as accurate information. Join Fetal Hope in leading the way to hope by joining us *at one of our upcoming events!*

TTTS Race for Hope National Event Series

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 September 29, 2007 - Los Angeles, CA
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 April 2008 - Tampa, FL
 2008 - Houston, TX
 2008 - Boston, MA

that commitment, and as long as it was honored, we had no major break-ups.

My mom says that although the DO's are important, the DON'Ts are hardest to follow in times of stress. They mostly deal with cutting yourself some slack. My mother had rules about that, too.

DON'T sweat the small stuff, as they say. That includes worrying about shifting loyalties. With triplets (or with twins who have older or younger singleton siblings) it's not uncommon for two to buddy-up, or gang-up, against the third. Alliances are changeable as tides, and friends today may be sworn enemies tomorrow. It's best for a parent to observe from the sidelines; mediating may lengthen the dispute or aggravate the disputatious. This, too, shall pass.

DON'T worry too much about equality. You can't always make things fair or equal all the time. That's okay, and we understand. Time is the

great equalizer. To this day, not one of us begrudges the other receiving a certain hand-me-down, a shared present or a skipped allowance. My mom, like all mothers, did the best she could, and we understand that, as your children will. Our childhood



was wonderful and happy; our memories are laughter-filled. Mom struggled and sacrificed so our lives were never diminished by what we didn't have. We grew up, we've matured, and we've been there

for each other, always.

One of my sisters called me the other day to chat and reminisce. Her awe-filled voice related what her OB/Gyn had told her that morning: An imaging test done to determine the cause of some recent cramping indicated she might be dropping more than one egg during her cycle. My sister was simultaneously excited and disturbed by this prospect. We laughed together at the thought of her continuing the triplet trend.

The idea of a second-string of multiples has its charms, and I might just send her this list of DO's and DON'Ts. Before I act, though, I think I'll set up an appointment for an ultrasound of my own. ♡

Xenia Schiller and her sisters grew up in Jasper, Ala., and now all three live in Birmingham, Ala. They're very close. Xenia is an editorial assistant/staff writer at Promise Network, and freelances on the side. Neither she nor her sisters have kids—yet (she thinks they all worry which one will turn out triplets first!) Xenia is a widow.

Catherine and Benjamin, 8 months



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Donald E.L. Johnson, Publisher, September 26, 2007

Dining out with toddler-twins: Excursions to disaster

Other people dine out with little kids, so why couldn't we? Why was I so afraid of such a simple excursion? Because I'm smart.

On our first such adventure, after 15 minutes of happy chatter, our 2-year-old twins began to eat crayons. Add the novelty of drinking milk from a straw for the very first time instead of from sippy cups. Despite these warning signs, we remained unprepared when our table abruptly turned into a scene straight out of Monty Python.

It started with a dribble, then a stream, then torrents of gushing liquid from my child's mouth. I sprang between our table and the one adjoining, where eight grey-haired adults oohed and aahed over their freshly delivered quarter-chicken meals. Standing between the tables and presumably dotting on my adorable 2-year-old daughter, I dug a blanket from the diaper bag, soaked up excess fluids, one-handedly retrieved a clean set of clothes, changed her in her highchair, and tactfully dropped the offending clothing and blanket beneath her chair. My husband gaped as I worked, panic-stricken. We didn't dine out for a while after that.

After all, we got what we deserved. Lazy parents trying to skip shopping

for, cooking for, and cleaning up after a healthy, creative and delicious meal designed to delight their toddlers. Yes, we were those people: We had ordered fries.

Six months later, it happened again. We were returning from a trip and my husband wanted our last meal away from home to be special (i.e., a place where you don't have to line up for your food). I was skeptical, but you can't deny a guy with twin toddlers a little glamour in his life.

We ended up at a German restaurant, settled in at a corner table far from the madding crowds. With seemingly an entire wing to ourselves, I figured it wouldn't be too bad. I was forearmed with a virtual suitcase of toys, a well-stocked diaper bag, and had a mouth-watering pint of beer of front of me. We ordered the kids' meals and sat back to enjoy our drinks.

I like to think the next part was my husband's fault. It's simpler that way. Because how could I be stupid enough to ignore my daughter slurping an entire glass of milk in less than one minute? Thirsty is one thing. Then there's trouble. And the trouble spewed forth in torrents.

We learned a valuable lesson that night: If your kids are pukers, do not choose restaurants with carpet. Or with cloth tablecloths and cloth napkins. Or



with bathrooms where you're expected to use open countertops as perfectly reasonable changing tables.

Later that night, sitting in our hotel room eating cold, soggy schnitzel from foam carry-out boxes, the children fell asleep in their playpens.

Reviewing our pricey tab (we tipped generously), we decided we'd wait a while longer for glamour. For the time being, take-out pizza and a six-pack would suit us just fine.

Kim Suvan lives in Calgary, Alberta, with her husband and 4-year-old twins. Kim hopes to return to school for her PhD in English Lit when the twins start 1st grade. She aspires to replace the term "potty" with "restroom," reclaim her makeup bag for holding lipstick instead of Hot Wheels cars, and is honing her skills at Texas Hold'Em to prepare herself for a back-up career as a professional poker player.

Hope can be such a strong word to be so small... and can mean so much to so many.

Each year, thousands of pregnancies are affected by Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), which affects identical twins sharing a placenta. No one knows more than the families affected the fear that interrupts what *should* be one of the happiest moments in life.

The Celebration of Hope is a beautiful illustration and celebration of those who survived TTTS, as well as many who lost the fight. We invite families with survivors to submit photos of their children for possible inclusion in our 2008 Celebration of Hope Calendar. With nearly 1,000 calendars sold last year, families diagnosed were given hope and babies' lives were saved. We also encourage those parents who experienced a loss to submit their child's or children's names as a wonderful way to honor their precious angels.

The Celebration of Hope is an annual fundraiser benefitting the Fetal Hope Foundation which provides informational, emotional and financial support to families affected by TTTS and other fetal distresses. Fetal Hope also funds leading research centers throughout the country.

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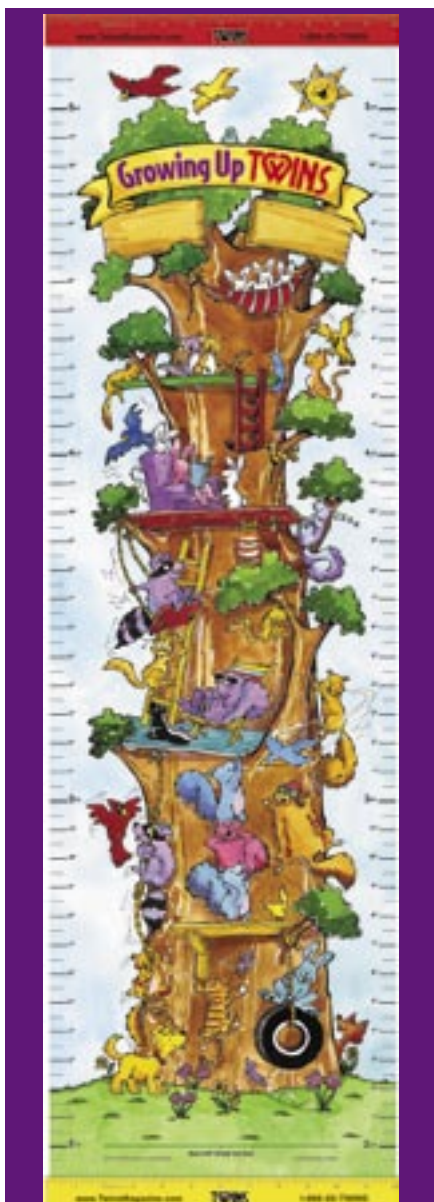
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Designing woman: Mom of twins runs home-based biz with her mom

By Jessica Bad Heart Bull



Being a Mom is hard work...being a mother of twins is harder yet. And starting a business when I was a new mother of twins? Was I out of my mind?

Well, maybe. But the truth is, I had a great product idea and I wanted to bring it to market.

The summer of 2003, my baby girls were 3 months old and I came up with a Kit concept called Bagzookes®, based on a "Sisters Pajama Party" where my aunts, sisters, cousins, daughters and grandma made some terrific tote bags out of newspaper-and-magazine clippings plus a few items from a local hardware store. I was quite involved in scrapbooking at the time, and I saw a potentially huge product for the scrapbooking industry—basically, scrapbooking a bag using our kit and your own photos, papers and embellishments.

And so Bagzookes® was born, shortly after my girls were. Bagzookes® is an all-inclusive kit complete with all materials and hardware to create a personal tote bag.

So I learned—starting a business is hard work, too! My first priority was to my children and my husband. I didn't want to sacrifice our family in any way if I started a business, nor did I want to put the kids into daycare. Therefore, my kids were going to have to be a part of my business.

Armed with that guiding principle, my idea, my business partner (my mom) and only \$500 of personal money, I launched Tre Bella Design, the umbrella company that owns and markets Bagzookes® and other products we may develop. The \$500 paid for our incorporation; start-up costs, trademark and a provisional patent. We've been able to cover all expenses to date—sales have been fantastic—and we aren't

swimming in lots of debt.

I'm not making a six-figure income, but the perks from tax benefits and other things make it worthwhile. Our ultimate goal is for Bagzookes® to be picked up by a larger company that has more resources than we do.

My mom and I handle everything. Our second year, sales doubled and growth since then is on target.

I'm often asked, "How was it being a new mom of twins and running a business?" Overwhelming! I had to be highly creative about finding time to work on my project. My twin-toddlers' naptime is still my get-as-much-done-as-possible time.

I scramble to make calls, fill orders, do some dishes. Late nights are a fact of life, to this day, as I scurry to return

My Bagzookes® Kit's evolution

"The summer my twins were born, I set out to make my first prototype Bagzookes® bag with my beautiful baby girls on it. At first, I thought maybe making the bags and selling them would be the way to go. But it soon became obvious this was too personal a bag to make for people. So, I came up with the kit concept—all the consumer has to do is add her own papers and pictures to personalize the bag. I designed the bag to be disposable—I wanted it to be affordable and last about one season, so you could make another bag as your life changed (or for the fun of it!). I think I've personally made myself about 50 of them! It was an immediate hit among all my scrapbooking and crafting friends, and went crazy—gangbusters—from there. We hope to bring some 'line extensions' to Bagzookes® in the near future."

emails, write marketing campaigns, etc. Thank goodness for cell phones and wireless Internet on laptops.

I've been asked, "If you had it to do over again, would you?" My honest answer typically is, "If I knew then what I know now, probably not." I believe in my product whole-heartedly, but it's exhausting trying to stay organized, manage home life and business meetings. Additionally, it takes a long time to begin to generate profits (something none of the "experts" really tells you when you're starting out).

Financially speaking, you need a lot of money to run a

business (something else the "experts" don't tell you when starting out). We're still considered a start-up company and our annual revenues are under \$100,000.

Tre Bella is home/internet-based, which allows more time and flexibility to be with my kids all day—with the exception of an occasional meeting at another location.



Jessica Bad Heart Bull with her daughters, Bailee and Noelle, 4.

And I'm home at night to tuck them into bed.

We've had many growing stages since starting. Our kits were \$29.95 and we offered variations—party kits, for example. To lower our retail price, offer it more places and generate more profit, we outsourced manufacturing parts of our kit. We sell kits individually on our website for \$22.95. We're working on ways to bring costs down more and make the kits even easier. We want Bagzookes® on the mass market, so we're researching scrapbooking companies with whom we might partner.

I work 25-30 hours a week and haven't used daycare until recently—a dear friend now takes the kids five hours once a week. I try not to work weekends and have complete control over how much or little I work. The downside of working less and playing with kids more is my company probably has grown slower. But my children are my priority and their young years are whizzing by.

I've become adept at scheduling and organizing my time. Admittedly, there are days the dishes don't get done or the laundry is behind, but those are minor dislocations in my world and they'll be done eventually.

Jessica Bad Heart Bull lives in St. Cloud, Minn., with her husband Craig, 4-year-old twin daughters, Bailee and Noelle, and son Ethan, 9 months. Craig is of the Oglala Tribe of the Lakota Sioux Nation. Jessica and Craig stay connected to family out on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and participate regularly in customs and traditions of the Lakota Sioux culture.

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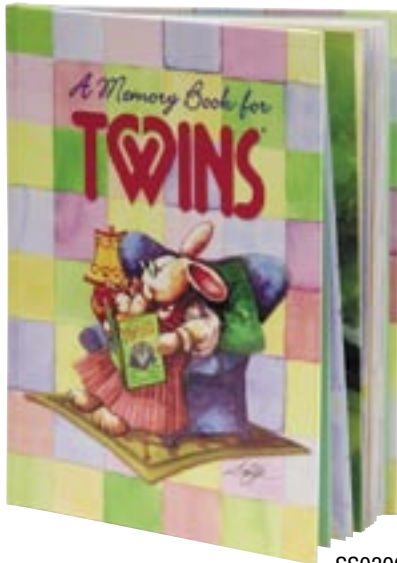
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Awed to be expecting twins,
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As days passed and months moved on,
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Thrilled by the promise of the joys to-be,
Like two voices joined in ABC's.
Shared 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,
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Partners, soul mates and best friends,
The love of each of you will depend.
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I knew my heart was touched by grace.
My hands now full-as most will say,
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Awed to hold my little ones,
Our lives together have begun.
Blessed with heaven's gift of two,
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A. 12"-x-15"



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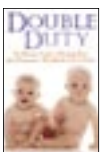
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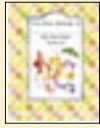


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T is for Twins: An ABC Book

\$15.95
Mary Bond
Rhyming book pairs each letter with a photograph of twins or triplets engaged in activities from tree climbing to napping. Space to insert own photo on last page. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Twin to Twin

\$15.95
Margaret O'Hair
Rhymes and playful illustrations depict an exciting day with rambunctious twins, who play and learn to walk. Hardcover, 36 pages.



Twice as Nice: What It's Like to Be a Twin

\$16.50
Nicole Rubel
What's it like to be a twin? Nicole knows because she is a twin. A potpourri of facts, witty little riddles and history, the book will appeal to all families with multiples. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Jan and Ann are Twins

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Barbara Sherwood
Look-alike twins switch places. Mom takes Jan to Ann's favorite place, and Dad takes Ann to Jan's favorite. Oops! Paperback, 20 pages.



My Twin My Friend

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Lynne Cump
The joy of being a twin is explored in this entertaining, rhyming story. Twins have a special friend who is both alike and different in their own way. Together they make a great pair. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Two is for Twins

\$16.99
Wendy Chayette Lewison, illustrations, Hiroe Nakata
Twins are two as two can be. Each one has someone else to share, to help, and to play a game. They are two times the hugs, two times the fun. Wendy Chayette Lewison's rhyming book is a celebration of the joys of twins. With colorful watercolor illustrations by Brooklyn artist Hiroe Nakata, this is a book that toddler twins will find irresistible and fun to read. Hardcover, 40 pages.



Hello Twins

\$15.99
Charlotte Voake
Twins Simon and Charlotte don't look much alike nor do they like doing the same activities. Charlotte likes to build things, while Simon likes to make things fall down. Both love books, but while Simon looks at the pictures, Charlotte likes to put her own pictures in the books. They're two of a kind. Hardcover, 32 pages.



The Chairs Where Pam & Sam Sit

\$5.95
Cynthia Grannell
In the style of "This is the house that Jack built," the milk lands on the floor, the cat licks the milk, the cookie falls on the cat and so on. Paperback, 16 pages.



Tiny Tired Twins

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Elizabeth DeArmond
Bedtime story filled with illustrations of twin animal babies, book delivers a peaceful sleepy message. Paperback, 16 pages.



I Love You the Purplest

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Barbara M. Joosse
"Who do you love the best?" asks one of mama's children. "I love you the reddest," she answers. "I love you bluest," she says to another. Story about the unique love a mother has for each of her children. Perfect for parents with twins! Hardcover, 24 pages.



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Barbara J. Neasi
Simple story written by a mother of twins, describes how twins are alike and yet different. Vocabulary list helps children learn new words. Paperback, 32 pages.



Twins!

\$10.98
Charlotte Doyle, illustrations, Julia Gorton
In this simple to read book for babies and toddlers, twins need double in the bottles and twice the swing pushes, but they also give twice as many kisses. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Guess Who Needs Glasses? Bumpy and Boo Visit the Eye Doctor

\$15.95
Sheri Manson, illustrations, Marcela Cabrera
Teacher Miss Hannah and Bumpy and Boo's mother take the class and the twin brothers on a field trip to the eye doctor. Dr. Grant gives each of the boys an eye examination, and discovers that one of the twins needs to wear eye glasses. This is a lavishly-illustrated, entertaining book for young school-age twin children who may experience a similar situation. For ages 4 to 8. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Which one of us is gonna drive the sleigh? >>>



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:: Martin and Marcus
6 months
Brandywine, MD



2:: Kara and Kamryn
6 months
Willits, CA



3:: Ella and Mary
6 months
Cleveland, MS



4:: Nick and Lexi
8 months
Larchmont, NY



5:: Aidan and Ethan
4 weeks
Virginia Beach, VA



6:: Jonathon and Jason
10 months
Montgomery, TX



7:: Will and Jake
6 months
Napa, CA



8:: Makayla and Keeley
11 months
Bonita Springs, FL



9:: Ryan and Sean
2 years
Clifton, NJ



10:: Brianna and Blake
2 years
Abbotsford, WI



11:: Maegan and Massey
4 years
Wickliffe, OH



12:: Michelle and Megan
2 years
Reno, NV



13:: Thomas and Will
6 months
West Islip, NY



14:: Braedyn and Broadie
5 weeks
Wayne, PA



15:: Boston and Bailen
5 months
Cleveland, TN



16:: Allison and Elizabeth
15 months
Murfreesboro, TN



17:: Luke and Liam
11 months
Harrisburg, PA



18:: Benjamin and Danielle
6 years
Littleton, NC



19:: Phillip and Sophie
1 1/2 years
Montreal, CAN



20:: Beckett and Chase
8 months
Houston, TX

- Photo Tips**
What we are looking for:
- Sharp focus
 - Heads close together
 - 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. [Go to www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) for a release form.

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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ZD - 19	UK - 14	ZM - 9	DZ - 4
DZ - 18	DZ - 13	MZ - 8	DZ - 3
DZ - 17	UK - 12	MZ - 7	DZ - 2
UK - 16	MZ - 11	UK - 6	DZ - 1

Based on parental reports:

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The Toxic Kitchen (& other hazards)

By Julie Riekse

Think. Think. Think.

Goodbye, quick-and-easy macaroni and cheese. Adios, apple chips. So long, bacon bits.

Three hours into my cleaning spree and I was still on jet fuel. Bags of trash blooming with my family's favorite foods mounded around me like the some bizarre plastic mountain range.

I pulled forth a brimming container of (unnamed) peanut butter, one of the four foods my 3-year-old son will actually consume, and squinted to make out the label: "Made from roasted peanuts and sugar. Contains 2% or less of molasses, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (soybean), fully hydrogenated vegetable oils (rapeseed and soybean), mono- and diglycerides and salt."

I gasped. Bad enough that the maker was loading up a childhood classic with heart-clogging oils. Even worse, they sneakily declared the fact. Telling shoppers that "2 percent or less" of a product is involved in its packaging makes the harm appear minimal. Well, they weren't going to fool this momma.

They might as well replace the colorful label with a skull and crossbones. Peanut butter was poisoning my children!

I tossed it into the open trashcan with aplomb.

I always got like this after a good seminar. And the night before had been a doozie. Nutritionist Lexie Smith had made a presentation to my twins club meeting about eating natural, organic food. Dump anything with a pesticide sprayed on it. Eliminate refined flours, and forget you ever heard of sweeteners like Splenda, created in labs. Avoid food additives and dyes and, of course, fast food.

She backed up the importance of healthy eating with scary numbers: Childhood diabetes is skyrocketing, many tweens have corroding arteries, infertility strikes more Americans than anywhere else. Diet alone, she added, can prevent most diseases and ensure your body works like it's supposed to.

I concluded right then and there it

was a dereliction of duty to ever again put marshmallows atop my kids' cocoa.

And so I began dumping. And dumping. And dumping. Five hours later, my pantry looked clean enough for Martha Stewart to inspect. Hardly any "toxic" boxed food remained. Canned goods included only staples—chicken broth, diced tomatoes. Only whole wheat pastas remained. I had organized my spices according to the Dewey Decimal System.

Bravo, I thought, shutting the door and cracking open a Mother Earth Mango juice.

The next morning, at 6:21, my little Will wanted breakfast. Well, he never actually wants breakfast, but I feel it's important to put something in front of him so I can truthfully tell the Department of Child Neglect (which will surely come calling, upon noting boney ribs protruding from his torso) that I tried to feed him.

All peanut butter, cereals and nitrate-laden bacon were gone. I poked around my now-neatly-arranged pantry and—ah ha!—spied whole grain Quaker Oats for old-fashioned, stovetop oatmeal.

Oops. No way Will would eat it. I mean, even the organic stuff sporting happy, furry Elmo on its box is routinely rejected.

What else could I do? Then, inspiration struck. I would make a healthful oatmeal bar like the kind marketed in the "easy breakfast" section of Kroger, except without all the trans fats.

I called Will to don his pint-sized apron and patted myself on the back—the nutritionist said children who help prepare their food are more likely to actually eat it. Together we found a cookbook.

"That's funny," I thought to myself as we leafed through the pages. "All the recipes including oatmeal are for cookies. Well, I'll just have to improvise."

Will cracked the eggs and plopped them into the bowl. Next, butter—two full sticks.

"Oh, well, that's a lot of butter, but at least it's natural," I reasoned, optimistically. That noxious margarine stuff could limit a

child's IQ, I just knew it could.

Next, sugar. Lots of it—almost three cups—brown plus the forbidden white granules. "So, there's a little sugar," I thought to myself. "At least I didn't use Splenda." And the kids were going to eat the bars long before naptime, so they'd have plenty of time to burn it off before I tried putting them to bed.

About to start the mixer, I heard Twin B banging on the door. "Don't move," I told my little chef. "Momma is going to get Sister."

Five minutes later, the blonde was begging to help the brunette. Would this be too many cooks in the kitchen, though, and would it lead to spoiled broth? I wondered.

Will glared at Elizabeth, who was eagerly pushing a chair closer. Faster than you can say "cardiothoracic surgeon," she scrambled up and lunged for the long wooden spoon in her brother's right hand. Chaos ensued.

In an attempt to salvage our morning, I fished a bag of M&Ms out from behind the Organic Cheez-Its. (I kept them with a clean conscience, you see, as they are my potty-training incentive.)

I poured a cup of candy out on the counter and told Elizabeth to sort out all the blue ones from the pile, so Will could continue to stir the batter in a sister-free zone of contentment.

Meanwhile, Will used this tiny break in momentum to try the batter as a new hair gel. Butter, sugar and eggs being very sticky-goopy, removing the slop from his curls took a few minutes.

I looked over to see Elizabeth jamming 400 dyed M&Ms into her mouth as fast as she could possibly do so. (I assumed Easter Bunny pink was probably not a color found in nature.)

"Rainbow!" she screeched, dumping the remainder of the one-pound bag into Will's batter.

Our breakfast cookies—that's what they turned out to be—were terrific. Extraordinary, really. Especially when warm. Especially when washed down with an ice cold Diet Coke.

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"I have had mine for a year and a half and absolutely LOVE IT. It pushes so easily through anything...sand, grass."

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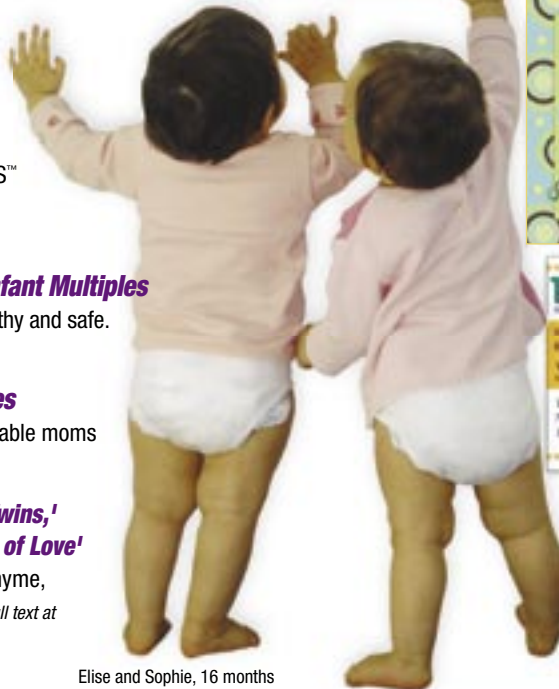
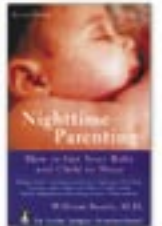
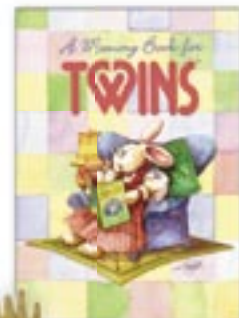
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