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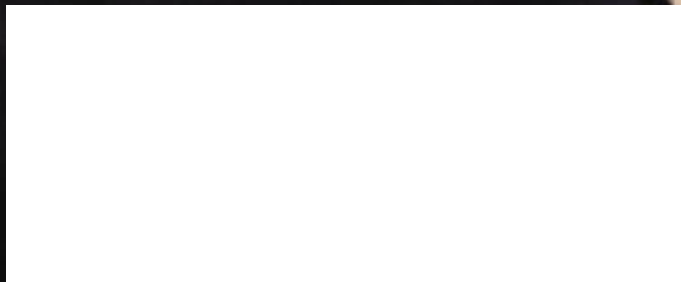
IVF TWINS:
Should parents
tell all?

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TWINtense rivalry

July/August 2007
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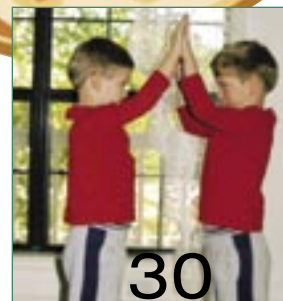
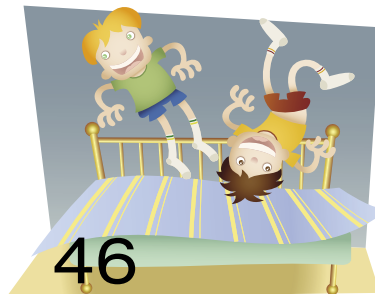
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COVER-KIDS



Simeon and Kaitlyn Palomino, Dayton, OH, were born November 12, 2005. Kaitlyn loves dolls, books and dancing. Simeon loves cars, books and tackling his sister.

Cover Photography by Jacqueline Astahoff



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Eeeek! Our home has been invaded by aliens...and it's had a huge impact on our lives!

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JULY/AUGUST 2007

TWIN™ 3

New and interesting ... you'll find it all in this issue

Josh Coleman, PhD and expert on the subjects of retaining, renewing, refreshing and restoring the sizzle in marriages, returns to TWINS™ in this issue after a couple of years away to finish writing several best-selling books and travel the country on book/interview tours. Josh is a dad of twins (of course!) and since he last wrote his "Married, with Twins!" column for us, he has appeared on ABC's 20/20, NBC's The Today Show, ABC's Good Morning America, and been interviewed on NPR, the BBC, and many other radio broadcasts. He's been in the spotlight for writing *The Marriage Makeover*, *The Lazy Husband*; and *When Parents Hurt*. He's finalizing his latest book, *Married, with Twins: Life, Love and the Pursuit of Marital Harmony*, to be released in September. It'll be available at www.TwinsMagazine.com. Welcome back, Josh (see page 12)!

In the last four issues, we've made a point of running articles about families tending to the needs of one or both twins with disabilities or other special needs. So many families are in this situation, and with these articles we're answering a real need for many of you. Lo and behold, John Wood, MD, read our stories and contacted us to ask if he could contribute a new, regular column on the subject...he's named it TWINS—Twins With Increased Needs. John is a dad of MZ (identical) twin sons, survivors of TTTS, one of whom has special needs. John is a board-certified family physician living near Duluth, Minn., and we welcome him aboard in this issue (see page 15.) His new column addresses the physical, emotional, medical and family dynamics issues inherent in trying to satisfy all the needs of family members when one child is disabled. Have questions or subjects you want John to write about? Send me an email at the address below...

Career decisions are often difficult when twins arrive, especially if you have a satisfying and fulfilling job, but Allison Briggaman found the decision to stay home with her twinfants made itself at one point. Read about Allison's "Aha!" moment, on page 18.

Sandy Clark, on the other hand, went a different route in her career and became a mom-preneur when she invented the leading twins-nursing-pillow, an outgrowth of her difficulties breastfeeding both twins simultaneously, which she was absolutely determined to do. Now she has one of the leading companies serving families with twins. See page 16 for Sandy's story.

When twinnies are born with the assistance of IVF or other medical technologies, we have to prepare ourselves to answer our children's questions. Do we tell all? Part? Nothing? Cynthia House Nooney examines the implications and presents a range of options. You'll see most parents favor telling all. See page 20 for Cynthia's story.

Amy Stuart Taylor, who has her doctorate in school psychology, knows her sons faced major obstacles as a result of their prematurity and health issues. But they've done so well in their 8 years Amy took time to look back and see which of her child-rearing techniques have paid off big-time in helping them succeed. You'll find her story on page 10 very enlightening. My take-away? Throw away the videos in the car—start listening to audio books!

We all need good belly-laughs to maintain our sanity, right? You'll find them right here and you'll probably recognize yourself in each of these parent-of-twins stories: Julie Blair Riekse's *The Princess and the Pee*, page 24. Pam Eichner's *Twinsane Asylum*, page 28. Kim Suvan's *Life With Twins*, page 29. Philippe Murat's *Attack of the Clones*, page 36. And Lauren Kafka's *Happy Endings* (of those blissful daily nap-periods!), page 46.

Enjoy! And write to me...I really like to know what you're thinking! Email me at twins.editor@businessword.com



EDITOR IN CHIEF

TWINS™

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PUBLISHER

Donald E.L. Johnson

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Susan J. Alt
(303) 967-0128

twins.editor@businessword.com

ART DIRECTOR

Karyn Sader
(303) 967-0134

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Susan J. Alt
susan.alt@businessword.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Richard Rhinehart

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Sonya Craney
(888) 55-TWINS

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

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

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

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Rip and tear

Since you don't have a suggestions box, I'm sending you this email. Please, either make TWINS™ Magazine's cover tougher, or send the magazine to subscribers in an envelope! Every time I get the magazine, it looks like it's been through a shredder! It isn't just one issue this has happened to; the last three have come like that. If you want me to read TWINS™, please pass this suggestion on to whomever it pertains to, OK? Thanks!

I want to save these issues, but I have to tape them together just to read them! I am serious!

If you can't shove the magazine into an envelope, just refund my money and I'll not get it at all. You can do better than this!!!

Jane Derry
Galesburg, Illinois
Via email

Editor's note: We apologize profusely for the condition of your issues. We can tell you're serious because of the number of exclamation points in your letter. We hear you! You'll receive replacement copies of the last 3 issues so you'll have "unshredded" ones for your files. Please, hang in there with us. We love you and want you to continue to be part of our TWINS community for the long haul!

Having said that, we wish the USPS could do its job without causing us and you so many problems....we pay a fortune to them and then get shredded in the process, as thanks for spending our hard-earned money. Gasp! Many magazine covers are exactly the same weight as TWINS™ and they don't get shredded in delivery. Thankfully, we receive very few calls, letters or emails from people like you who seem to be on the wrong end of a postal service sorting machine that isn't working well. We monitor this carefully, and hope your situation is a temporary one. We're checking with the USPS from our end and would appreciate you making a call also. Shredded covers usually result from poorly calibrated sorting machines locally.

How do I traverse a sandy beach with my toddler twins?

I'm at my wit's end. I want to be able to take my twins (by myself) to the beach, and be able to transport them safely across a wide sandy beach to the shoreline. They're only 2, so they need to be strapped into a cart or wagon so it's safe for them, and I'll have lots of other cargo—including a beach umbrella—as well. I can't find any wagon or stroller that would be big enough to hold everything, and would work on sand. If the sand is deep, you can't use Wonder Wheels, the beach caddy, and it would also be too hard on my back using that. The Step 2 all-terrain wagons don't have the capability to go across sand. I checked out the Radio Flyer and they're just not big enough for kids and "stuff." I could get the kids into it but not the cargo.

Help! I'm a twin, too. My mom used to take us to Coney Island when we were little, and she did it by herself. But she has passed away, and for my life I can't figure out how she got us across the beach with all the stuff we hauled. Does anybody have any ideas?

Audrey Jurena
Franklin Square, NY (Long Island)
Via phone voicemail

Editor's note: What a great question, Audrey! Let's get a conversation going about this topic....there are lots of moms of little twins who go to the beach and don't have another person along to help supply another set of arms and hands to carry all the stuff. We went online to search and landed at www.wagonworld.com, discovering they sell a truly magnificent "Phantom All-Terrain" wagon that you can get with a huge 48-inch bed, wooden bed and high siderails made of poplar, cushion for seating, back-cushion, jaunty shade canopy, extra-wide tires for easy movement over sand, extra-long pull handle, and —get this— a built-in cooler-rack on the rear that holds a standard-size ice chest for food and goodies. Out of this world! Over the top! Perfect! Oops, it only costs \$575. Well, it is so perfect and so well made, it might well be worth the money. Almost as wonderful as a surrey with the fringe on top. Now, if we could only find a used one on Craigslist!



Phantom All-Terrain at wagonworld.com...the Rolls Royce of wagons at \$575.

The inverse power of praising children

It would have been very helpful if you actually had linked to the article you cited in your e-Newsletter sent out in March, 2007, referring to the subject of praise for children. It took me forever to find it, and it was very worth reading: <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/index.html> "How Not to Talk to Your Kids—The Inverse Power of Praise" by Po Bronson.

Susan Sweitzer
Hartland, Vt.
Via email

Editor's note: Thanks, Susan! I thought I had included it, but I inadvertently left it out. So sorry. But I'm glad you took the time to read it. By the way, for those of you reading this letter who don't receive our TWINS e-Newsletter, write to me at twins.editor@businessword.com with TWINS E-NEWSLETTER in the subject line, and we'll be glad to add you to our address list for this regular free communication.

Day care dilemmas

I am impressed by your magazine's stories and resources. I have found them helpful in taking care of my new twin boys (and their older sister). However, I was disappointed by TWINS' article in the March/April, 2007, issue that commented on a study of day care and its effects on children, which appeared in the journal, Child Development. TWINS' comments about this study would lead one to believe that all forms of daycare were bad for children and that alternative forms of childcare were definitely better.

This is not what the authors discovered. The final conclusion by authors in the study was, "The results indicated that although parenting was a stronger and more consistent predictor of children's development than early child-care experience, higher quality care predicted higher vocabulary scores and more exposure to center care predicted more teacher-reported externalizing problems. Discussion focuses on mechanisms responsible for these effects, the potential collective consequences of small child-care effects, and the importance of the ongoing follow-up at age 15."

I would encourage TWINS to take the time to discuss these findings with an author of the study or listen to one that was done on National Public Radio a few weeks ago:

Children's Health—Is Day Care Truly Bad for Kids?

NPR, Day to Day, Mar. 30, 2007: News headlines recently referred to researching findings revealing day care's ill effects on children. But a conversation with the researcher reveals that the study's findings may have been misrepresented in the media. Slate's Emily Bazelon talks with Madeleine Brand. (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9242120>)

Cara Debley, MD

Seattle, Wa.

Via email

Editor's note: Thank you for your input, Cara. Our intention was not to slant our report, nor misstate the study's findings. We too had heard Emily Bazelon's comments following her discussion with the study's head researcher, and we read other material about the study as well. Sincere people can have honest disagreements about the study's conclusions. Indeed, the report seemed to be a "camel built by a committee" when we read it, yet we found a number of points the report made thoughtful and provocative enough to warrant a story. Parents who can put aside their own desires and biases to look at both sides of this story have cause to question the effects of using daycare continuously from birth for their children.

Nearly the only positive things in this report concerning long-term daycare for little ones was that overall, these children scored higher on vocabulary and socialization skills if they'd been in daycare for three or four years prior to entering school; but those "positives" also didn't last. They disappeared very quickly once kids were in elementary school. This seemed to eliminate virtually the only possible plus of putting young children in daycare over a period of more than two years, if at all. We're sure to hear more about this subject as time goes on, and we'll withhold final judgment about the pros and cons of daycare until more is known.

Yet evidence is beginning to emerge (and amass) that indicates "family care" by a parent or close relative is a far better environment for young children between birth and age 4 or 5. There are exceptions, or course, but the whole purpose of large studies of this type is to try and identify the big picture of cause and effects. I think we'd all agree that finding extremely "high quality" daycare is difficult at best, and assessing day-to-day quality of care in any particular center is problematic. In many cases parents desperate to find a place for their children choose "the best of the worst" for lack of enough options or the financial resources for anything better. As a society, we will reap what we sow, and the next decade or two will present a clearer picture of how we're succeeding at these new styles of parenting.

Fighting TTTS every day

Thank you, and everyone at TWINS Magazine, for donating \$1 of every new and renewed subscription during your 2005 and 2006 TTTS campaigns. I want the readers of TWINS Magazine to know that they have truly made a difference.

Since starting The Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome Foundation 17 years ago and helping over 10,000 families diagnosed with TTTS, I never cease to be amazed how generous and compassionate people are to us as we fight this terrible disease.



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Thank you and God bless each and every one of you. We deeply appreciate your support.

Mary Slaman-Forsythe, Founder and President
The Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome Foundation
Bay Village, Oh.
800-815-9211 ttsfoundation.org savethetwins.org
Via email

Delivering Hope to parents of twins

We want to thank TWINS™ Magazine from the bottom of our hearts for your exceptionally generous donation and support of the Fetal Hope Foundation. Your encouragement, support and friendship is so important to us. We thank you and so do all the families this will support.

Lonnie Somers, Founder and President
Fetal Hope Foundation and TTTS Race for Hope
Littleton, Colo.
www.fetalhope.org Lonnie@fetalhope.org
Via email

Children after twins: What's the scoop?

I am writing regarding a story line that I have a great interest in. I have fraternal twin boys 13 months old and my husband and I are thinking of adding to our family. I believe it would be greatly beneficial to many readers of your magazine if you did a story on "children after twins." In this article it would be nice to have several families who spaced the children they had following twins at different times (i.e., twins and then another child one year later, two years later, five years later, etc.) and have them explain what their life was like. It would also be helpful to have them explain why they chose to have more children when they did and the pros/cons of their decision. I know that I am very much interested in how hard it is to add to a family of four, because I want what is best for my children—current and future. It is hard to find people, even on the Internet, who have had children after twins, and I have also encountered many people who have the same question I am asking: "When is the best time to have more children after twins?"

I also think it would be interesting to see a sidebar story containing the facts on the odds of a family having multiples again. I recently met a family that had fraternal twins and five years later had identicals!

Christy Kruckeberg
Via email

Editor's note: What a good letter, and a good story idea. We've spoken over the years with loads of families that have singleton children following their twins, and then sometimes have more twins, too. You have a great idea, and I'll assign this as soon as possible. In the meantime, be sure to visit the TWINS Message Board at www.TwinsMagazine.com, and go into the Family & Health Talk Forum or The Buzz and get a good discussion going on this topic. I think you'd find a lot of support, and a lot of soul-mates who've gone through this thought process or are going through it right now. Keep us posted, OK?

Parent faces death of her twin son to brain tumor

Thanks for the TWINS™ e-Newsletter that you send out to us. I do enjoy getting them. Wanted to ask you if you guys have had any articles regarding loss of a twin. Our son was diagnosed with brain cancer last year and we're going to lose him in the next six months or sooner. I just wanted to maybe connect with others who are going through the same thing.

Michelle
autistictwins@gmail.com
via email

Editor's note: We're so sorry Michelle and her family have to face this terrible tragedy. How very sad that bad things like this happen to good people for no reason at all. There's no rhyme, reason or logic to these events, is there? Life sure tosses each of us curve balls, doesn't it?

We've had quite a few articles over the years about families dealing with serious (and terminal) illnesses in their twins, and coping with the stress of pending loss and the death of their children. We suggested to Michelle that she take time to go to our TWINS Message Board at www.TwinsMagazine.com, and register to post messages in several different Forums for families with health and loss issues..... We're absolutely sure she'll find people who understand her family's situation and can relate to what they're going through.

Parents of twins who are on the TWINS Message Board are incredibly willing to share their time and affection, helping others make it through trying periods of their lives. We sent Michelle the following URLs to follow for help: <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/vbulletin/forumdisplay.php?f=31> (for parents with twinnies who have special needs); <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/vbulletin/forumdisplay.php?f=15> (for parents who want to discuss their twinnies' health Issues); and, <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/vbulletin/forumdisplay.php?f=42> (for parents who give and receive grief support).

Babies with separate birthdays

Regarding the article in the March/April, 2007, issue about twins having separate birthdays: While I can understand the writer's enthusiasm for having her children born on opposite sides of midnight, which makes separate birthdays, this can be a little hurtful for those of us whose children were born with significant time differences. A few of us have children with birthdays that are days, weeks or months apart. Some of us have to endure two separate deliveries—one child arrives and then we await our other child's birth for days or even weeks. This is quite a traumatic experience.

I am not dismissing the fact that having twins with separate birthdays can be fun for many parents... but kudos to us mothers with children who are really unique and who have arrived during completely separate births and have separate birthdays to celebrate it.

Angela Stenen, Mother of twin girls born 2 full days apart
(1 vaginal, 1 c-section—2nd twin was breech)
White Bear Lake, Minn.
Via email

Values: An important part of the SAHM decision

I had a reaction to your article about stay-at-home moms in the

May-June 2007 issue. In the story about moms deciding whether to stay home with their children or return to work, the part that got me stirred up was a comment about parents of twins needing to examine their value system in light of whether to return to work or not. Yes, that is a really huge part of whether or not you'll stay home. I wanted my kids to learn right and wrong according to our guiding philosophies. There was a religious aspect, too. Included in the right-or-wrong was wanting them to know how to treat other people, how to behave in public. Yet, this isn't something just parents of twins think about, and it doesn't come up only after twins are born. All parents think about this issue. It is something we think about all the time, whether we're parents of twins or not.

I was a teacher, and we adopted after trying for a long time to have children. So the decision to stay home was an easy one for me. Now we have four children, including 3-year-old twins. I think about going back to teaching at some point, but I have yet to decide when that will be.

Jacqueline Sinclair
Arvada, Colo.
Via phone voicemail

Legislators are waking up

I want to thank TWINS™ Magazine for writing in support of "Twins in the Classroom" legislation. I agree that parents of twins and higher-order multiples should decide whether their children should be placed in the same or separate classrooms.

Rest assured I support House Bill 65 and have signed on as a cosponsor to its companion, Senate Bill 1248.

Andrew E. Dinneman, State Senator – 19th District
Pennsylvania State Senate
Harrisburg, Pa.

Where does Massachusetts stand?

I would like to know where Massachusetts' legislators stand on the twins-in-school (separate classrooms vs. together) issue.

My twins just turned 3 in February and I got the impression at the public school screening for pre-school that they the school officials couldn't even guarantee both of my girls getting into their pre-school program because it's like a "lottery". I chose to back out of the application process until next year because I currently have the luxury of staying at home with them, but they are my only children and I'm not familiar with what rights I will have once they eventually start public school.

Carol-Anne Blackwell
Via email

Editor's note: Thanks for writing to us. Here's where to start....there's currently a lot of activity in the twins community in your state. Go to www.twinslaw.com and click on Massachusetts....you'll find names of people who are spearheading efforts in Mass. Once you find out where things stand, policywise, and how you can participate with other parents of twins, you'll want to ask the active moms of twins nearby how to approach this issue with your local school officials. At any point, if you need letters from TWINS to bolster your case, locally or legislatively, let me know and I'll be glad to jump in. I've written some pretty strong letters, and they seem to be doing some good.

TWinfo

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It's hard to believe, but my twin boys will soon turn 8. After years of living day-to-day—and often moment-to-moment—I finally have time to reflect. Both boys recently received rave reviews for their academic and social prowess at 2nd-grade conferences. They're not perfect kids, but despite prematurity and early health concerns, they're doing well. And now, with some perspective, I realize certain things have made a positive difference in their lives.

Here are seven things I think helped my kids:

1 Read, read, read

Auditory processing is a skill kids need to succeed in school. It involves attending to and listening to a speaker. Both are skills teachers report kids today often can't do. My boys listen to their teachers, most of the time. That buys them brownie points. I think the boys listen well because we have read to them daily since they were babies. Reading to our sons each night progressed into reading with them and, now, they read on their own for 20 minutes each night. That's a habit most teachers promote. Since we established it long ago, we don't have nightly battles. We try to make it a family event so the boys see us reading books, too. And I still read aloud whenever I can, even though they are proficient readers. It guarantees snuggle time.

Also, we're nuts about books on tape or CD. That's how we survive long car trips. We didn't get the built-in DVD player in our family vehicle, so the boys had to learn to listen to follow along with the story. Audio stories have formed much of our family's shared entertainment legacy. We still talk about Hank the Cow Dog, Freddy the Pig, and other friendly companions who have joined us on the road. The voices on these audio recordings shaped the characters in our heads and hearts. Somehow, the adventures seemed richer and lasted longer than the flashy visuals of TV or movies.

2 Think of yourself as teacher

All parents are teachers. But many lack the confidence to do it purposefully. You don't need a degree in education to teach your child to read or do math. I taught my boys to read when they were 4. I began with the alphabet and progressed to short words and then short books, providing small motivators for their efforts and successes, just like with potty training.

Each year I realize I can't quit teaching if I want my children to continue to grow. Think of teaching basic academic skills as part

of your job as a parent. Don't rely on your child's teacher. Think of school as icing on the learning cake, rather than the cake itself. Then, you won't be disappointed.

As a school psychologist, I had some inside scoop on matters educational. Yet I did nothing other parents can't do, with a little initiative. Buy the books and educational games and dive right in. When your child seems ready, become the teacher he or she seeks. You can do it.

3 Limit media exposure

We are swimming upstream here, I know. Visual media for kids has exploded. It's not all bad. But too much passive absorption isn't good for kids. They need to develop the ability to "attend" without vibrant visual stimuli. That is, they need to be able to focus on subject matter, follow along, comprehend what is happening, and stay tuned. And they need to exercise their natural curiosity and creativity.

My husband is great at encouraging the kids to play on their own. I'm amazed at how creative they become when given the freedom to roam. I often feel as if I need to provide some alternative entertainment if I'm not actively playing with them. But the more you can leave the TV off, the better kids do.

Besides, they have each other! That perk offers opportunities for creativity, as well as conflict. Guaranteed, they will not grow bored. I was an only child. As a parent, I've had to develop a tolerance for conflict and chaos. I'm sure the boys learn more

from each other than I ever did from my play dates. Like many siblings, they have become masters of negotiation. Hopefully, these early lessons in intimate relationships will pay off down the road.

4 Trade money for face time

I chose to put my family ahead of my career since...well, ever since I learned I was pregnant with twins. Those decisions have created some unexpected professional and financial challenges. But I still consider them among the best decisions I ever made.

No toy can replace a parent. Or, put another way, a present parent is the best present. I'm convinced my children are confident and secure because I have been a steady, reliable factor in their lives. My kids don't have lots of fancy stuff. They have missed camps and classes for financial reasons. But they have rarely had cause to miss me.

That's worth more than all the money in the world to me. And, I think, to them, too.

5 Promote healthy habits

Bedtime has been rock solid at our house since the boys were 6 months old and began sleeping through the night. We started with



By Amy Stuart Taylor

7:00 pm and then moved it back to 8:00 when they were older. Now, they read for a while before lights go out, but they're still in bed by 8:00 almost every night.

That routine may well have saved our marriage. It guarantees us uninterrupted time together each night. Plus, it ensures the boys are well-rested enough to tackle the academic and social demands of school.

Food-wise, I'm a stickler for fruits and veggies and milk every day. We try to limit fast food to once a week. My boys are fit and don't have to worry about their weight. They feel good and have lots of energy.

That energy needs a channel, of course. We promote outdoor play and participation in sports and active recreation. The boys have a built-in buddy for ball play. While they don't always share interests, most activities benefit from the social connection. Sometimes they simply cheer each other on.

6 Just say no

A friend with a teenage son commented that her son seems to grow increasingly demanding with her, as if he believes he can eventually bully her into giving in. She sticks to her guns now, but is soft-hearted and often capitulated to his demands in the past. Her son's whining has grown bigger right along with his body.

Her tale is cautionary for me. I have that indulgent-gene when it comes to my children's emotional lives. I feel uncomfortable when my kids are unhappy. Fortunately, my husband has provided a counterbalance. He sets firm limits and I see the kids respect him for it, even when they don't like it.

Twins can wear you down. Often, I managed one "No", but being pushed a second time, every time, pushed me to the brink of giving in. Twins require a lot of patience for redundancy.

So, say "No!" and mean it, now. It's good for them. And you'll be glad when they're teenagers you've not given in to their every whim. Those whims will multiply exponentially.

7 Watch what you say— they're listening

At report card time, my son William's teacher asked the students to self-evaluate. William chose three things he thought were strengths: Math, science, and drawing. His choices didn't match what the teacher noticed (strong writing and language skills), but they reflected perfectly the things that I have told him I think he does well. That was a shock. Clearly, he pays close attention to what I say.

I've said a lot of positive things to both boys and they generally brim with confidence. But, in truth, I haven't distributed my comments equally. I've suggested presidential aspirations to Wesley, who's an extrovert, but not to William. I've given the boys different messages about how I see them and what I believe they might become.

I am trying to be more conscientious about it, but I wish I'd been more deliberate about what I chose to say (and not say) when they were younger. Children are always listening.

Looking back over the last eight years, I wish I'd been gentler with myself and my children. And worried less. But I'm improving. I am committed to honest self-reflection and open communication. Parenting twins is rough, but rewarding. The old axiom remains heart-wrenchingly true: They simply grow up too fast. ♥

Amy Stuart Taylor, Ph.D., is a writer and parenting advocate, with her 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).



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Alexander and Benjamin, 9 months



Julie C., from Kentucky wrote to us pleading for help!

“My twins are 13 months old. I cannot get them to sleep through the night, unless they are in bed with me. What can I do? This is becoming a problem with my married life: To make room for the kids my husband has started sleeping on the couch. We are very strained. Any ideas? I didn’t have this problem with my other children, and I am at a loss. People without multiples just do not understand.”

Julie C., Kentucky

Dear MOM,

You’re right, parents of twins have a special challenge getting their kids to sleep. It’s not uncommon for exhausted and exasperated parents of twins to end up just like you two—the twins are in the parents’ bed and one parent is on the couch.

Why do so many parents of twins have problems getting their kids to sleep? Let’s review the basics:

- **TAG-TEAM STIMULATION:** Just about every parent of twins has succeeded in getting one twin down only to have the other twin awaken the sleeper with cries, talk, or, depending on the age, active prodding. Do twins egg each other on? You bet!
- **ENERGY RAMP-UP:** Before bed, twins have the ability to get each other excited through play or torment. This is especially true as they get to be the age of your twins. They can’t go to sleep if they’re wired.
- **PARENTAL EXHAUSTION:** Parents

of twins are much more likely to be exhausted than parents of singletons. Exhausted parents often have a harder time finding the inner reserves of energy and self-discipline to do what’s right to promote their twinnies’ good sleep habits because the parents are functioning in survival mode.

So, what are good sleep habits for twins? Sleep specialist Karen Kesti, RN, San Francisco, is a nationally-known expert who specializes in twins. (Visit her at kbbaby.net) There’s an established process that works, she affirmed.

Starting at birth, babies need a consistent bedtime routine based on their weight, age, and sleep cycle, says Kesti. The hours children sleep without interruption should gradually increase with age along with maturation of their brains. However, as infants get older, they become much more aware of what they want, and how to get it. “Here’s where parents [often] lose an important opportunity to reinforce good habits, because the infant gains a sense of what might work to keep you there and what won’t,” Kesti says. In other words, by 13 months, your twins have a very good idea what they can do to end up in your bed and not in their own.

Twins have to be taught to self-soothe and become comfortable with being alone. In many cultures, children sleep with their parents until fairly late in childhood, and the children do just fine psychologically. However, if your goal is to get your kids to sleep in a separate room, you have to take a very different approach. An important developmental step for children is to learn how to soothe themselves when feeling tired or distressed. Parents who walk their child to sleep, allow their babies to sleep in the parents’ bed, or sleep next to their babies to lull them to sleep interfere with their children’s ability to learn to do this alone. This isn’t to say that those children won’t ever learn the lesson, but they are more likely to learn it much later.

Parents need to develop expectations for their children, and live according to these expectations. By 8 months, infants have developed the ability to keep themselves awake. Kesti has observed children often drive themselves hard to increase their adrenaline levels in order to overcome their physical desire to sleep. Many parents make the mistake of putting a child to bed only when he or she appears tired or sleepy. However, says Kesti, it’s far more important to have a nighttime ritual that communicates the message, “Okay, we’re now beginning the wind-down to sleep, even if you don’t feel tired.”

For young children, rituals are extremely important. They establish parameters for behavior and learning. The clearest way to communicate your expectations for your children, says Kesti, is to have a consistent set of activities that you do every night at roughly the same time before sleep. These typically include bath, changing into pajamas, and reading a story in each child’s bed—not in your bed.

Children need to know that you intend for them to remain in their own room. An important step in developing good sleep habits is to not allow your twins to leave their room(s). One way to enforce this is to install a gate at the door after children can get out of their cribs—they can call out to you but can’t leave the room. Once children understand they’re expected to stay put, you can install a childproof doorknob cover that twists but won’t open the door. The childproof knob will teach your they have a choice—they can either have the door open and ungated, or closed and childproof. Kesti finds most kids will gladly stay in their beds in order to keep the door open. It’s fine if the child ends up sleeping by the door or gate as long as he/she doesn’t leave the room. “Eventually, he’ll figure out that it’s more comfortable in bed than on the floor,” Kesti says.

Blankies and teddies help smooth the way toward independence from parents. The English pediatrician-turned-psychologist, Donald Winnicott, referred to se-

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Naturally

curity blankets and teddy bears as “transitional objects.” They serve the function of helping an infant make the transition from complete dependence on the parent to the beginnings of independence. Transitional objects are an important part of self-soothing for a small child, Kesti notes. Children need to learn it is important for blankies and teddies to stay in the bed where they’ll be needed and used most. Therefore if one twin wants to sleep by the gate, you should say, “Teddy bear (or “blanket”) is really tired and he wants to sleep in his bed, not on the floor. Mommy and Daddy are tired too and want to go sleep in their bed.”

Children will almost always cry when left alone to sleep, at the start. Kesti doesn’t believe in the pure “cry it out” method, leaving the child alone to cry herself to sleep. But she does recommend parents work to distinguish cries of real distress from those expressing frustration or disappointment. The latter should be tolerated for a while before getting up to put the child back to bed. She recommends the following sequence:

First time: Go into the child’s room after five minutes and reassure your child that you’re there. “Success depends on the parent’s vulnerability and the child’s resistance,” Kesti advises. The more guilt-ridden and worried the parent, the less successful he or she will be in getting the child to sleep. Similarly, some children are more sleep-resistant than others and may require more frequent tries. Your visits in the room should be very brief.

Second time: Wait 10 minutes for cries of frustration, complaint, or protest. If/when you enter, make your contact short, sweet, and to the point. “Bedtime routines are all stepping stones to signal your expectations of sleep,” not to visit or interact, says Kesti. Don’t walk around with your child to soothe her/him, unless very briefly if the child is extremely distressed. The goal: Get him back down as soon as possible.

Third time: Wait a bit longer, up to 15 minutes, before going in. Make sure you’re clear with your expectations in tone and body language. Be straightforward and no-nonsense. This is no time to cuddle or

talk—those activities are stimulating and suggest a longer visit. Send a clear message the only reason you’re there is to quickly comfort the child (less than a minute) with a pat or two on the back, a few soothing words, then leave. It can help to bring a sippy cup with water to communicate that you’re there only because of thirst, Kesti has found. Remind your child that teddy and blankie want to go to sleep and the other twin wants to sleep, too. ♥

Dr. Joshua Coleman has appeared on ABC’s 20/20, The Today Show, Good Morning America, NPR, The BBC, and other news/radio programs. He is a psychologist in private practice in Oakland and San Francisco, and the father of twin boys and a girl. His new book *Married With Twins: Life, Love, and the Pursuit of Marital Harmony* will be released in September 2007, and will be available at www.TwinsMagazine.com. Please visit www.drjoshuacoleman.com and sign up for his free newsletter. Dr. Coleman’s very recent book, *When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies When You and Your Grown Child Don’t Get Along*, was published by HarperCollins.

Catherine and Benjamin, 8 months



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A dad deals with his twin son's unique medical needs

By John Wood, MD

I'm a physician and father of twins, Peter and Benjamin. My wife, Kim, was diagnosed with TTTS at 26 weeks, and delivered just shy of 30 weeks. Peter, the donor twin, weighed 1 lb. 7 oz. at birth, and has periventricular leukomalacia (PVL). This was caused by decreased blood flow to Peter's brain during a sensitive time for neurological development, between 24 and 26 weeks.

The PVL has caused microcephaly and spastic quadriplegia, a form of cerebral palsy. His brother, Ben, the recipient twin in the TTTS relationship, weighed 2 lbs. 5 oz. at birth and is healthy in every way. Peter spent eight weeks in NICU; Benjamin, seven.

I have a twin sister (also the mother of fraternal twin boys) who found out Kim was pregnant with twins and sent us a subscription to TWINS™ magazine. Our first issue arrived when our boys were in the NICU. We love the magazine, and want to see in it more stories and information about families and parents facing the challenges we faced then, and still face.

This column is the first of many on this topic that I will write for TWINS™ Magazine. It is for everyone, not only families with a special-needs child or children. Please join me on our journey to better understanding of how to face the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows of nurturing our families and raising happy, well-rounded children with whom we face the future with joy and optimism.

The day we learned Peter had PVL was the day our boys were born. An ultrasound of his brain confirmed what the perinatologists had suspected. I remember telling the neonatologist when we heard the diagnosis of cerebral palsy, "I've had to tell many people bad news, but it was quite another thing to hear it." As the father of this child, it was quite another thing to realize this was my child and that he wasn't going to be normal.

The time in the NICU was one of uncertainty. Peter and Benjamin seemed as frail and dependent as small birds, and almost as unknowable. Often I found myself focusing on the monitors and devices attached to our boys rather than the boys themselves. Luckily, they had few setbacks. Day by day they gained weight and independence. Soon, they were discharged.

Our boys are now 2. Change comes slower to Peter, but he makes steady progress, following a path few have traveled. Peter receives many weekly therapies—speech, occupational, physical, cognitive and social. To help counteract the increased muscle spasms (and lack of muscle control) seen in CP, Peter receives a

daily dose of Baclofen. He has had one set of botox injections to his adductor (inner) thigh muscles and will probably receive a second series in early May to help give him better muscle control of his leg movements. Peter is just beginning to crawl and loves the growing feeling of independence. Meanwhile, Benjamin is running. Both boys make us very proud. Peter's spirit impresses everyone.

What I'd like to do in this column is tell our story, and also make this a forum for questions, comments and discussion by parents who have special-needs twins (or higher order multiples). My wife and I find ourselves constantly learning and constantly struggling. And I know we are not alone.

Let's all learn from one another. Have I provoked reactions, or triggered questions in your mind? Are there medical or family dynamics subjects you'd like me to discuss in upcoming columns? Email me through the magazine at twins.editor@businessword.com, with TWINS Special Needs in your subject line. ♥

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. After reading several recent articles in TWINS™ about dealing with disabilities, Dr. Wood offered to write an ongoing column on the subject.

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Breasts are for more than ogling

By Sandy Clark

Breasts, knockers, boobies, hooters—there are more names for this area of the female anatomy than any other. They're gawked at, giggled at, drooled over and some are more enhanced by more than digital photography alone.

But stick a baby on the end of one of them and the laughing stops. People turn their heads in horror. I actually witnessed one gentleman trip over a small dog while attempting to pass by a nursing mother without actually having to make eye-breast contact.

I realize almost the entire male population thinks women's breasts were invented purely for their enjoyment. But why is it that the same men who will trip all over themselves to catch a peek down a woman's blouse on the subway are quite offended by the glimpse of a nipple in the mouth of a breastfeeding baby? Why are breasts socially acceptable only when adorned with tassels, rather than a nursing infant? It's not as if breastfeeding mothers are strutting around with their blouses gaping, yelling "Hey you! Look over here! I've got my boobs exposed for you to ogle! Check 'em out!"

Nursing mothers are simply feeding their babies. And usually quite discreetly, I might add. Personally, given the choice between a screaming infant and a content baby at his mother's breast, I'll take a flash of flesh any day.

Everyone seems to have a favorite (hilarious?) breastfeeding story, or knows someone who does. People's attitudes—spouse, parents, siblings, friends, even younger children—play a big role in the breastfeeding experience. The role of Mother Earth Extraordinaire can be difficult to carry off when your husband makes comments like, "For goodness' sake, you're not going to flop those puppies out right here in public, are you?!" Or, your well-intentioned girlfriend positively gushes about how wonderful the whole experience was for her and her daughter: "Look at how happy and healthy my Molecular Biologist has turned out."

This isn't overly helpful if you're strug-

gling with bleeding nipples and a baby who seems to have been born with his first set of teeth. Many of us assume that as soon as our newborns are placed in our arms, babies take to the nipple as if magnets were somehow involved, and the feeding frenzy begins. I bought into this. How hard can it be, I thought? You shove a nipple into the kid's mouth, he sucks out the milk. Big deal.

When the time came, it didn't happen that way at all. My son was obviously a leg man. He showed absolutely no interest in either of my breasts. I waved those nipples in front of his face as one might wave a new Ping driver in front of her husband. Nothing. He took one look, screwed up his little face and howled his objection to the one-eyed Mammary Monster obviously about to gobble him up. I'm sure this will come up in therapy one day.

The magical connection

For women truly blessed with a supportive and informed circle of friends and family, breastfeeding may well be one of the most rewarding aspects of motherhood. The best part is it occurs long before your adorable little bundles of joy are flushing your gold earrings down the toilet, just to see them go "Bye bye."

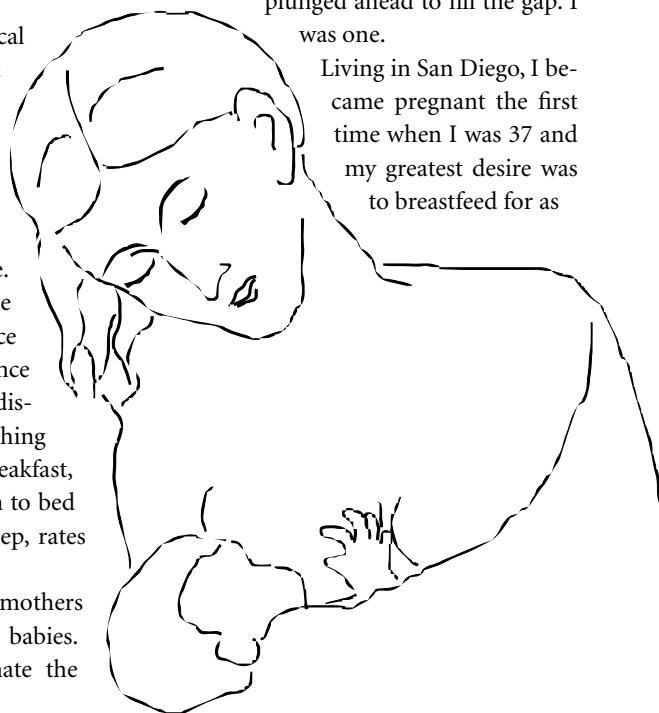
Breastfeeding is that magical time when you first connect with your newborn babies on such a profoundly intimate level. You bask in the beauty of your God-given ability to simultaneously provide nourishment, security and love. To look down upon your little ones taking their sole sustenance from your body is an experience equaled by few. (I have since discovered, however, that watching your child make her own breakfast, thereby allowing you to return to bed for a few extra minutes of sleep, rates right up there as well.)

I have always marveled at mothers of multiples who nurse their babies. It's enough work to coordinate the

feeding schedule of one baby, let alone two or three. Yet breastfeeding more than one baby is not only possible, many have done it quite successfully. Personally, I think it would be a whole lot easier if we were made like cats—have four babies, have the required four nipples (and even extras to accommodate the heavy drinkers), lie down on one side, and while thumbing through the latest issue of "Parenting Without Stress: Fact or Fiction?" and sipping an iced tea, we'd nurse our offspring lined up like kittens, slurping away. What's more, that kneading-thing kittens do with their paws has got to help that mother's stomach return to its former self. My own cat had six kittens once and her stomach is as firm as all get-out. You go girl.

But, alas, we women have to be more resourceful than cats. Fortunately for women who choose to breastfeed, whether one baby or many, organizations and publications are geared to support and encourage their success. For breastfeeding to be a successful endeavor, mom's comfort and confidence are of the utmost importance. As the saying goes, "Necessity is the mother of invention." The important operative word here is "mother." Many mothers who discovered something lacking in our world plunged ahead to fill the gap. I was one.

Living in San Diego, I became pregnant the first time when I was 37 and my greatest desire was to breastfeed for as



long as possible. My first ultrasound showed two tiny heartbeats instead of one. Surprise! I wondered if breastfeeding twins would ever be a reality.

Armed with an encouraging sister who was a Childbirth Educator and valuable information from La Leche League, I prepared myself to tackle the task with both breasts. (The pun is totally intended!) With every intention to nurse throughout my twins' first year, I began tandem-nursing. I tried several nursing pillows and positions, but soon realized I'd require much more physical support if I was going to succeed.

After hearing my frustrated complaints, my husband suggested, "If you think you can design something better, do it!" (Now, some women have told me that if it had been their husband making that suggestion, he would have been met with a death stare, a whack upside the head, and a full tub of Baby Wipes strategically aimed at his chest.)

So, I armed myself with some blocks of foam and an electric carving knife from my kitchen, and went to work. Thus, my popular twins' nursing pillow and my

company, Double Blessings, was born. Was it not enough for me to have just given birth to twins? Was I really just a show-off?

After many prototypes and refinements, my nursing pillow has taken the breastfeeding world by storm. My "EZ-2-Nurse Twins" Nursing Pillow is unique among its competitors—it has an angled top surface that slopes towards Mom on all three sides. This safely positions both babies towards their mother's breasts, while freeing up her arms and hands, which she needs for positioning, stimulating, caressing and burping her infants.

Simple math tells the story that convinces any mom of twins: If a mother bottle-feeds formula to her twins, she'll wash, sterilize and fill over 700 bottles in the first month alone! It exhausts me just thinking about it!

Life with multiples is busy enough without the bottle Olympics. I'm also thinking, "Why (in effect) lay out the cash to buy the cows, the farm, and the equipment, when you can get much higher-quality milk for free?"

Here I am, six years later, and Double

Blessings now markets a huge variety of twin-specialty products and twin-related embroidered t-shirts, ball caps, visors and window signs. Our nursing pillow for twins is now offered in an inflatable model that adjusts to a mother's individual comfort level and deflates for convenient travel and storage. We've included a detachable back pillow that provides even more comfort and support for moms nursing their twins.

My twins have long since moved from breastmilk to karate and ballet lessons. But I'm passionate about helping families with twins (or more!). I did it. You can too. And strangely, breastfeeding time with twins provides one of the few moments of peace moms of baby multiples ever find. I know, I've been there, done that! ♥

Sandy Clark's company, Double Blessings, is at www.doubleblessings.com and 1-800-584-TWIN. Her "EZ-2-Nurse Twins" Nursing Pillow includes instructions on where to sit, where to place the babies, and how to coordinate bringing them to the pillow — and the breasts — at the same time, without help from anyone else.

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Career or Family?

The difficult decision that changed my life!

By Allison Briggaman

Deciding to be a stay-at-home mom was the hardest decision I've ever made, but also the best decision I've ever made.

I thought becoming a stay-at-home mom to raise my twins meant giving up everything I had worked so hard to achieve. But what I didn't realize at first was what I would gain that is so much more worthwhile!

I never wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. I had worked very hard to put myself through college and was working in my desired career field. I had a great job, great coworkers and took pride in my work. After my fraternal twin girls' births, I took maternity leave and returned to work full time. The girls were placed in daycare.

At first things seemed to be great! My schedule was hectic—up every morning at 4; in bed every night by 11—but I thought I could handle it. Yet, after three months life started to unravel.

Winter came. The twins got sick with continuous colds and chronic ear infections. My husband and I trekked weekly to the doctor. The girls took every antibiotic available, but the colds and ear infections wouldn't go away. One twin was hospitalized with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and pneumonia.

The agony of indecision

I became exhausted and began feeling overwhelmed. I couldn't keep up with everything and was losing control. Caring for two sick infants, doing household chores and holding down a full-time job was too much. Something had to give. But what?

Our financial situation had to be considered too. Even with my husband and me working full time, we were barely making ends meet. My husband's salary covered bills and groceries. But the cost of full-time daycare for two infants consumed almost my entire income. What money was left over each payday went to filling gas tanks on our vehicles just for commuting.

I agonized for months. I didn't want to give up my job. I worried



other people would be disappointed in me. I was first in my family to attend college and worked so hard to get where I was. I felt I would be a failure if I quit to be a stay-at-home mom.

I also worried about how my husband's and my relationship would change if I quit my job to stay at home and raise kids. I worried

he would lose respect for me and might start to resent me for staying home and not holding down a full-time job like his. I didn't want him to feel burdened with full responsibility for being the sole provider for our family.

I debated with myself daily. I did a critical review of every possible option, and had many conversations with my husband. I took a lot of time off from work to stay home with the twins because of their ongoing illnesses. Slowly, I realized I didn't want to go back to work any more. What I wanted was to be at home with my girls. But I still wasn't ready to give up my job, either.

My "Aha!" moment

Then, one day at work I sat staring at a picture of my twin girls. It happened. All the stress and tension I'd been feeling for months melted away. A feeling of calmness and peace washed through my body. I heard the words, "My heart isn't in this any more" inside my brain. I realized where I belonged was at home with my girls.

I suddenly felt relieved. The decision had been made. I was finally ready to give up my job and make the transition.

Deciding to leave my job filled me with mixed emotions. I was nervous about telling my boss, sad to be leaving a good company and my coworkers. But I was also excited. I joyfully anticipated spending more time with my girls and pursuing new opportunities.

The twins' first birthday was looming. How fast the first year has sped by and how fast they are growing! I thought. My realization they are probably the only children I'll have began to sink in.

Things came into perspective for me.

In the grand scheme of life, my job is just a job, I realized. I will always be able to return to the workforce, but I will never be able to recapture the days of my twins' childhood. I realized what I wanted more than anything was to soak up every moment of my twins' youth while I still could!

I broke the news to my family that I had submitted my resignation and would be staying home with the girls. Everyone was thrilled! I feel fortunate my family is so supportive and that we're in a position to be able for me to stay home with our kids.

Most of all though, I'm thankful we have twins—they've changed my life! If I'd had only one baby following my first pregnancy, I most likely would have continued working. I probably never would have known the joy of staying at home and I would have missed out on such an important part of life—raising my children.

Being a stay-at-home mom is the best thing I've ever done! Taking the girls out of daycare was best for them, health-wise. Since I've been home with my girls, neither has had a single ear infection or even a cold! They are healthy, happy, smiley little girls!

Additionally, my choosing to stay home has improved my relationship with my husband. There is much less pressure on both of us now. We're able to enjoy our time together instead of always rushing to get things done. We have time now to take the girls for walks after dinner, read bedtime stories to them and simply enjoy time together as a family.

Furthermore, our relationships with our family and friends have improved! Now that the girls aren't sick all the time and now we're not burdened every weekend with completing household chores, we visit with extended family and friends much more.

The twins are developing special bonds with their grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and close family friends. They are lucky to have a large family full of loving and caring relatives and it's important to me they have an opportunity to know each and every one of them while they still can.

Looking back, I wasted a lot of time and put myself through a lot of agony that wasn't really necessary. But I understand it was a process I had to go through. My husband and I needed to evaluate our situation and decide what was right for us as a family. I needed to honestly evaluate my feelings and decide if I would be happy being a stay-at-home mom.

It may have taken me a while to be ready to make the transition, but I am so very glad I did! I cherish every moment with my girls. I realize how quickly this time will pass and I know someday, I will look back and smile. ♡

Allison Briggaman lives in Weare, N.H., with her husband Jason, her 2-year-old twins, Julia and Kiera, and their yellow lab, Parker. She has a BS in wildlife management, and was a biological technician before becoming a SAHM. She now works for the NH Fish & Game Dept. in its endangered wildlife program.



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IVF babies: Do you tell your kids the whole truth, or not?

by Cynthia House Nooney

A few years ago, while I anxiously cared for my tiny, fragile newborn twin sons, a dear friend took a stack of photos I could barely stand to view and assembled them in an award-winning scrapbook. As painful as the photos were to me at the time, Kim realized—much sooner than I—how much their precious early records would eventually mean. Jack and Sam were born three months early, weighing 1 lb. 12 oz. and 2 lbs. 13 oz., respectively. Kim deftly placed cheerful borders and stickers around pictures of my twin infants' frog-like bodies fighting for life in their NICU incubators. She demonstrated an objectivity I couldn't possibly have mustered.

Today their scrapbook occupies a special place in our family room, where friends and relatives can (and often do) reach over and take a peek. "Oh my, what a start," they say. "But look at them now." Thanks to Kim, the beginning of my sons' lives has not been hidden or packed away; their ordeal (and mine) is in plain view. My husband and I both intend to communicate openly with them about their early and frightening arrival, as well as their subsequent three-month stay in the hospital. Our firm belief is that Jack and Sam have a right to know their own story, even if they appear uninterested.

Because I'm an older mom (I gave birth to my twins at age 40), many assume my children are a result of infertility treatments. Their conception, in fact, was spontaneous and shocking, but the constant speculation has led me to wonder whether parents who required assistance with conception will—or should—share their sto-

ries about their children's beginnings as freely.

Nothing but the truth

According to Bob Murray, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and co-author of *Raising an Optimistic Child*, parents should "definitely" tell their children if they were conceived via fertility treatments. "If a child feels secure, it shouldn't matter to him how he was conceived. As an issue, it probably matters much more to the parents than it does to the children. The reason they should be told is because it is always wrong to hide the truth about such things. In the long run, the most hurtful things are the truths that you don't tell and the secrets you keep."

Los Angeles resident Danielle Kaplan, born 36 years ago as a result of fertility treatments and one of two surviving quintuplets, grew up knowing her origins. "My sister Dawn and I knew at a young age

that my mom was unable to become pregnant on her own. That was her reality and our history."

The Kaplans were the first set of assisted-technology quintuplets born in California, as well as only the third in the nation. "My parents and our whole family have always been open about it. I would want my kids to know if I have similar circumstances. It's one more step in sharing life."

Alissa Nial, mother of 4-year-old twins Jessica and Britney, plans to tell her daughters about their conception history when they're old enough to understand. "I'll explain that mommy and daddy wanted them so badly that we had doctors help us get pregnant." Nial, who conceived her

twins via intrauterine insemination (IUI), will also fill her daughters in on a medical issue. "When they're teenagers, I'll let them know the reason I couldn't conceive naturally was because I didn't ovulate. I want them to be aware of this in case they have the same condition."

Medically speaking

Scott Whitten, M.D., reproductive medicine specialist at the Nevada Center for Reproductive Medicine, commends Nial on the discussion she plans to have with her daughters, and advises others to do the same. "It's important for children to know their parents' medical histories, particularly if their parents had difficulty getting pregnant, or if their siblings did."

Fertility patients should be knowledgeable about family ethnicity and genetic diseases, says Whitten. "Particularly if [the inability to conceive results from] a genetic disorder, such as cystic fibrosis, it's very critical that fertility specialists know this.



Big brother Cooper, 3 years, with twins Helen and Calvin, 4 months. All three of Amy Hudson's children were conceived by IVF.

With today's technology, we have ways of decreasing or eliminating defects onto offspring."

One of the leading causes of male infertility, cystic fibrosis is unknowingly carried by more than 10 million Americans who have no apparent symptoms, which means many couples have no idea they are affected. "If both the male and the female have a cystic fibrosis-gene mutation, that significantly impacts the ability to become pregnant," explains Whitten. "But now we have treatments for this."

From a medical perspective there are several reasons why parents should be upfront with their kids. "A child needs to know for his own sake," says Whitten. "It's not necessarily dinnertime conversation, but when appropriate, it's important for parents to discuss family history and genetics, as these can have a big impact on a child's health, reproductive abilities, and risks for conditions such as heart disease."

Whitten, who has completed numerous male and female infertility research

projects, describes the most common "endocrine disorder" in reproductive-age women as polycystic ovary syndrome, a condition that affects a woman's ovarian production and function. "Although the exact gene hasn't yet been defined, we feel there is a genetic linkage, and it appears to be more common with mothers and daughters, and sisters and brothers. If a patient is aware of family history, that proves helpful. The great news today is that problems with fertility have been overcome, and technology continues to progress."

Deliver the news with love

Much like discussing "the birds and the bees" with children, parents may be unsure about how to approach a conception-history conversation. "First, begin with a relationship statement such as 'You are the most important thing in my life' or 'You know I really love you.' Then use a 'who' praise statement and tell your child why you are proud of them," advises Murray. "Next, explain that 'We really did need you

to complete our life, our family.' Then go on to give the facts of conception."

Marijane Funes, a resident of Pelham, N.Y., and mother to 9-year-old boy/girl twins, was given fertility shots by a close friend who was a nurse. "Ever since my kids were born, whenever we'd see Claire, I'd comment about she 'Helped mommy and daddy have you.' When they were around 8, they asked how she helped and I very matter-of-factly replied that mommy needed special medicine to help babies grow in her stomach and Claire had to give it to me. That was it and I don't think they felt anything but more 'special' about the whole thing. Like any other delicate information, children absorb it best when it's straightforward; then it's just a question of gauging maturity."

Kaplan says she's grateful for disclosure from her parents; as she grew, she and her sister continued to learn more. "I feel fortunate that my parents were open about trying options in order to have children, and that they didn't give up. It's a blessing



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and a miracle that I even survived. And that's how my parents have always made me feel."

Timing matters

Murray recommends that children be told about their history as soon as they ask. "Or if they don't ask, as soon as they're old enough to understand, which is around age 10."

When telling a young child about how he was conceived, "A good approach is to say 'We wanted you so much that we tried extra hard, harder even than most people'

and then go on to explain in simple terms about the procedure," advises Murray. "If it's an older child, just say the facts. Depending on the child's age, he will probably either be bored by the whole thing (a typical teen reaction) or ask a series of embarrassing questions. Don't worry, just answer them matter-of-factly, emphasizing your love for your child and how glad you are that they're with you."

When not to tell

As Murray noted, if a child feels secure the details of conception probably won't be of consequence. "They might go into a mood for a few minutes like kids do, but frankly it shouldn't matter to them at all. Feeling loved and safe is all that really matters to children," he says. "It's similar to previous generations telling children they were delivered by a stork. Later when they discovered that wasn't true, it didn't matter; it was irrelevant if the child felt loved."

However, if a child is exhibiting signs of insecurity, such as having difficulty making friends, having trouble sleeping, not responding in class, or having behavioral problems, Whitten advises parents to wait a bit before discussing the subject.

"A child's insecurity comes from a feeling that all is not well at home. So adding to the complexity at that stage might only make matters worse. It's very important to avoid such conversations if a child is disturbed, or if the household is undergoing stress. A troubled relationship, a divorce, or other changes such as moving or beginning a new school are very unsettling to children. The most important thing when a child exhibits signs of insecurity is for parents to take a look at their own relationship," Whitten advises.

In good company

Most parents of multiples realize we are definitely not alone! The National Center for Health Statistics reports the twin birth rate in the U.S. rose 49% between 1980 and 2004, while the birth rate for triplets and other higher-order multiples rose 423%. One of every 100 American infants is now conceived using assisted reproduc-

tive technology (ART)—18% of those are multiple births. That doesn't include babies born with the assistance of controlled ovarian hyperstimulation (COH), which along with ART are the two most commonly used advanced fertility treatments. ART includes treatments in which eggs and sperm are both handled in the lab, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF). COH includes injectable medication to stimulate ovaries and egg growth.

Unlike the first IVF "test tube" baby born in 1978, children conceived with medical assistance are no longer unusual. Infertility is commonplace and widespread. According to the American Society of Reproductive Medicine, infertility affects about 6.1 million Americans, equivalent to 10% of the reproductive-age population and 15% of all couples. Infertility also doesn't discriminate—it affects both men and women equally.

Murray believes it might be useful during a conception-history discussion to mention that a lot of other children are conceived this way as well. "As they get older, they find out about that anyway. So if it seems appropriate or helpful to include, that's fine—since it's the truth."

Funess adds, "Frankly, in this day and age, I'd be surprised if my twins didn't know at least one other set of 'assisted technology' multiples. There are dozens in my neighborhood!"

Pave a two-way street

The well-known adage "give and you will receive," certainly applies in this situation. But creating two-way communication requires continuous effort and is most successful when begun early.

Take it from someone who appreciated the knowledge she gained as a youngster. "My parents have always been open with me, which makes it easier for me to be the same way with my children," explains Kaplan. "I think the most important thing is for parents to be open with their children and to communicate with them. If they don't communicate with children when they're young, how can they communicate with them when they're older?"

Whitten says medical history and

DISCUSSING THE FACTS OF (THEIR) LIFE

Bob Murray, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and co-author of *Raising an Optimistic Child*, offers these suggestions for parents when broaching a conception-history discussion:

- Never give a difficult or hard message without first giving praise and/or an affirming relationship statement.
- Make your child feel special, not because of the procedure but because of your love and admiration.
- Never make the story sound as if there is something wrong—either with the conception method or by inferring you are in any way ashamed of what you did. A child will immediately sense any reservations you might have and perhaps feel guilty.
- Give the facts of the conception as if they were quite normal (which of course they are).
- End with a hug.

conception discussions can help promote communication between parents and children. "I think children should be told how they were conceived so they understand how hard their parents had to work to get them." Sharing information helps form trust. And speaking from the heart, such as Whitten's example of "We wanted you so badly, which makes you that much more special," makes positive long-lasting impressions.

Your story. Their history.

Perhaps there is a part of your background—a family secret or a missing piece of information—you wish your parents would have shared when you were younger. It may have helped things make sense, fall into place, or would have explained strange behavior like hushed voices or odd glances. Most likely it would have answered why your own intuitive feelings sometimes cropped up and took hold. It's no secret that secrets can and do become downfalls. "There's always a problem if you keep a secret. It becomes bigger over time

and tends to snowball into other secrets. Telling the truth prevents things from becoming enmeshed," says Murray.

As we age, we become increasingly interested in our lineage, and we appreciate all the information we can find. It often helps us better understand what shaped us, what made us who we are. As parents, what we tell our children now will one day be important to their own self-discovery. It may take a while, but I suspect one day Jack and Sam (and, in turn, their respective families) will look through the scrapbook made so lovingly by my friend Kim and be grateful that their early history was pasted onto paper; that their story was told. It portrays how hard we all fought to be a family. ♥

Cynthia House Nooney is a freelance writer based in Southern California. She is the mother of 4-year-old twin boys.

TWinfo

Amy Rocka, New Caney, Tex., founded Amy's Angels, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-denominational charity, after losing twin sons, Clark and Jake, from complications of TTTS during pregnancy. Amy's Angels supports individuals and families who experience infant loss from conception to 1 year of age, and promotes awareness of twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, delivering bereavement keepsake boxes to families through hospitals with bereavement programs for parents who lose infants. Amy's Angels is supported by donations from friends, family and others who have experienced infant loss; Angels held its first annual BBQ fundraiser in March. Contact Amy Rocka at amy@amysangels.com. www.amysangels.com.

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The Princess and the Pee

A MODERN FAIRYTALE

By Julie Blair Riekse

Once upon a time, in a land called Flower Mound, Princess Elizabeth decided diapers were no longer to her liking. Her mother, a wise and astute woman, agreed the time was nigh to introduce her child to the merits of the royal throne.

The queen journeyed to the magical land of Tarjhay, where she traded her gold card for the prettiest potties even the pickiest princess would find appealing: A blue potty emboldened with a teddy, a green potty bearing a fish, a white potty with grand arms, and a pink potty the color of posies.

“Oh!” exclaimed Princess Elizabeth upon seeing her potties. “Me try them!” And so she did.

Princess Elizabeth sprinkled. Princess Elizabeth tinkled. She dripped. She dropped. She pondered. She puddled.

Her highness was very, very proud of her work and called the entire kingdom to the Throne Room to see the merits of her afternoon. The queen and king clapped! Twin brother Prince William spun in celebratory circles! Even the Royal Godfather, who had no children of his own and knew nothing yet of potty appreciation, could see with his own eyes how wondrous it all was!

The bare-bottomed princess beamed with delight. But after several days of potty parties, Princess Elizabeth grew weary of the process.

“Bebe want play, no potty,” she told the queen mother, with a look of dismay.

The queen, wanting to seize upon the princess’s initial excitement, quickly offered more incentives. She built a library in the Throne Room, complete with developmentally-appropriate works about potty time. She offered the princess a royal stepping-stool so her precious hands could easily reach the sink, a bowl for washing made festive by animal-shaped soaps scented with roses.

The allure of the tap lasted but a few days. Princess Elizabeth found standing on the stool to be tiresome. Her little calves grew weary. Her delicate fingers were wrinkled with so much washing.

Prince William wanted to play Hide-in-the-Royal-Drapery, a game much more interesting. Princess Elizabeth called for her Pull-Ups and declared potty time “All done.”

The wise queen knew from past experience that Princess Elizabeth had a will like that of the feistiest dragons in the kingdom. If the queen pushed Princess Elizabeth on the issue, she would not budge.

So the wise queen bided her time. Several weeks passed. The queen and her entourage were shopping at Babies-R-Us when Princess Elizabeth called for a trip to the local potty. This, thought the queen, is a very good sign. So she parked her purchases and wheeled the Royal Buggy into the bathroom.

“Oh!” said the princess, spying the kid-friendly facilities.

“Bebe see little potty! Bebe try!”

The queen, being a germaphobe, made haste to carefully prepare a quilted space for her cherub on the petite potty. Once the place was properly prettied, her highness requested to be partially disrobed for the main event.

Not wanting to lose momentum, the queen complied with the princess’s wish, though she suddenly realized her daughter’s royal robes were too complicated to remove quickly in such a confined space. There were buttons to undo, zippers to unzip, slippers to remove.

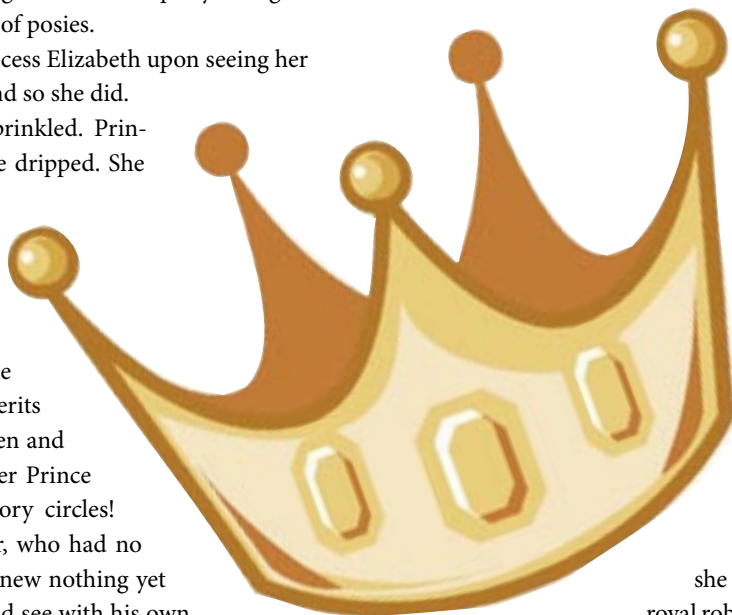
Princess Elizabeth used her creative energy while all this took place, busying herself by unrolling yard after yard after yard of rolled paper. Then, because the queen took so long, the princess carefully began shredding the paper.

Meanwhile, Prince William watched from his place in the Royal Buggy. He provided helpful instructions in a very loud voice so both his sister and mother would be sure to hear.

“Sit down, Bebe!” he repeated again and again. “Like Meeum!”

When no action was taken, Prince William cleaned out the trays in his Royal Buggy. He pitched his Royal Sippy Cup onto the floor. He dispensed his Royal Snacks. Being a very kind and thoughtful brother, he also emptied his sister’s tray.

The queen felt an unseemly prickle of sweat at her hairline. The Great Undressing continued. Princess Elizabeth shuffled beyond the billowing mountain of toilet paper and began conduct-



ing science experiments while waiting for her mother to complete the undressing.

She peeked beneath the lid of the machine to see exactly where water would originate when the machine was flushed. Then she caressed the underside of the porcelain lid to see if it was cool or warm or wet. She poked out her little pink tongue and was about to see if it tasted like vanilla ice cream when the queen finally lifted her onto the potty.

A calm washed over the threesome. It grew quiet. Too quiet. Princess Elizabeth swished her feet back and forth on her perch. Prince William sat at attention, mouth agape, waiting.

"Hmm," thought the queen, "perhaps we need a little encouragement."

The queen had lived only a short time in the Land of Flower Mound, Texas, but she had learned many in the community responded to loud chanting and arm waving.

"Prince William, we must cheer!" she exclaimed. Thus, she stood tall in the stall, raised her arms and began.

"Go, Bebe, go! Go, Bebe, go! Go, Bebe, go!"

Prince William chimed in. Together their voices rose and fell in a cadence surely heard throughout the land.

Suddenly, Princess Elizabeth went! She was very, very proud.

"Meeum's turn!" the Prince wailed, unstrapping himself from the Royal Buggy in a move so violent the rig began to tip. Perspiration dripped from the queen's delicate underarms like morning dew falling from a magnolia. But the queen was no fool: Never before had the prince uttered words showing interest in the potty.

She knew she must take the opportunity to introduce him to the pleasures of the throne.

She began again preparing the petite palette. The unadorned princess, seeing her mother would be occupied for several moments, tottered off to explore the facilities next door.

When everything was finally in place, including the prince, Sister, Brother and Mother all cheered with magnificent gusto.

"Go, William, go! Go, William, go! Go, William, go!"

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

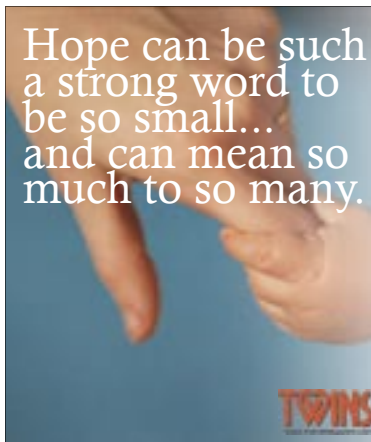
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To learn more about how you can submit information for possible inclusion, or to purchase a calendar, please visit www.fetalhope.org.

CELEBRATION OF HOPE
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Silence.

They tried again, even louder than before.

"Go, William, go! Go, William, go! Go, William, go!"

The prince squinted his eyes and grimaced.

"Meeum want snack," he said. "Meeum hungry."

The queen was relieved to have closure. And frankly, she was a little hungry herself.

As luck would have it, she too had been inspired by all the cheering. She gathered her children and their royal robes, washed their tiny hands and parked them in the Royal Buggy.

For a third time, she prepared the potty and took to the throne. The prince and princess stared with big, round eyes at their mother.

They began chanting. Faster and faster their words came tumbling out. Their voices crescendoed, their words filling the chamber for all to hear:

"Go, Momma, go! Go, Momma, go! Go, Momma, go!"

And go she did. ♡

Freelancer Julie Blair Riekse recently acquired two pairs of Crocs, which she reports make good boats if you forget to pack pool toys. She lives in Flower Mound, Tex., along with her subjects, husband Jim and 3-year-old twins William and Elizabeth.

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Ask **the Twins Nanny!**

by Michelle LaRowe
Multiples-Nanny Specialist

When Your Twins Don't Get Along

"Mommy he hit me!"
"But she started it!"

The sound of squabbling in stereo is enough to make you pull out your hair. How can two people who shared (and survived!) the tight space in your womb for nearly nine months fail to survive nine minutes without being at each other's throats? And yet the fights sometimes seem endless, in the space of your living room, your kitchen, everywhere.

Anyone with twins knows: Beyond age and appearance, virtually nothing is identical about them. You've probably also discovered that whoever said "Parents of twins have it easy, because their kids come with a built-in playmate" obviously doesn't know what they're talking about.

Sibling rivalry is a family fact of life. Throw twins or triplets into the mix, and the intensity increases exponentially.

Simply stated, sibling rivalry is the competition to be the favorite child. It's a battle for the love, attention and affection of one or both parents. It's a competition to be the chosen child—the one loved most by parents they least want to share.

Sibling rivalry has existed as long as families have. Even the Bible contains accounts of Jacob's and Esau's twin troubles.

So rather than taking on the impossible task of making your home a rivalry-free zone, you may be better off acting to "manage" normal sibling rivalry between your twins.

Do Remember your twins are individuals. Although they may share the same sex, age, and developmental stages, their personalities and temperaments are wonderfully unique. Remember personality-wise, your twins are no more alike than any other siblings.

Do Call them by their names. Using each twin's name and encouraging others to do the same rather than

addressing them as a unit ("the twins," "the boys," "the girls") allows them the freedom to develop their own personalities and interests to be comfortable in their own individuals skins.

Do Watch the wardrobe. Dress them similarly if you want to, but avoid making them look identical. And if they request to dress completely differently, say ok!

Do Allow for differences. Encourage the differences you see in each twin. Foster their distinctive interests and let them know they are loved for who they are.

Do Let them say "It's mine." Allowing each child to have some objects, spaces and friends of his own helps each to understand how to exist outside of the irreplaceable twin unit. Every person alive needs something that they don't have to share.

Do Encourage alone-time. Facilitate short periods apart for times of self-discovery.

Do Spend one-on-one time with each twin. Be proactive in spending time with each child. Bathtime and reading-time are great times in which to have short, meaningful one-on-one time.

Do Let them work it out. Allowing your twins to work out their conflicts alone will prevent you from becoming manipulated into taking sides or placing blame when you haven't got all the details. If an argument escalates into physical violence, separate them immediately, then investigate when things have cooled.

Do Have realistic expectations. Siblings don't always get along. Don't force

your twins to play together if they need time apart—we all do!

Do Give positive purposeful praise. Point out each child's strengths and praise them when they are interacting well together.

Do Set ground rules for behavior. Kids need a clear set of rules and expectations for how to treat each other. No hitting. No biting. No teasing. No name-calling. These are the foundations of your twins' relationship rules. Defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors promotes consistency in discipline.

Do Spend time together as a family. This stresses the importance of unity and helps advance a team spirit.

Do Develop a system for deciding on most-wanted privileges. Have a plan of action in place for determining who gets to push the elevator button, or who gets to sit on the favored side of the car. This will head off heated battles. Keep a coin handy for flipping, or keep track of who got to choose last. It'll will settle most disputes.

Do Let each twin express her/his feelings. Encourage each twin to communicate clearly, and insist the co-twin listen quietly. Helping your twins find the words to express their emotions gives each a sense of control. Be sure to validate each one's feelings without validating negative behavior. Responding, "I know you are frustrated, but hands aren't for hitting," empowers the child without condoning the behavior.

Do Model good behavior. You reap what you sow when it comes to childhood behaviors. Model positive interactions with your spouse

and your twins, and you'll be surprised how quickly it is mirrored.

Do Be fair. Hold each twin accountable for the same rules and regulations. Each should experience the same consequences for similar infractions.

Do Divert playtime battles. Use a timer to decide how long each twin gets to play with the favorite toy.

Don't Compare your twins with each other. How you compare your twins sets the stage for how they will compare themselves to each other and to outsiders. These seemingly innocent comparisons are at the root of destructive sibling rivalry.

Don't Use competition to motivate. A heightened sense of natural competition already exists between twins and needn't be enlarged. For example, have them race against a timer rather than each other when picking up toys.

Don't Try to do everything equally. If you treat your twins differently it's okay! They are different people. Meeting each child's unique needs is what is important. Just because Sean wore his shoes out and got a new pair doesn't mean Jane has to have new ones too, if hers are perfectly fine.

Don't Pay attention to who started it. It takes two to quarrel. Hold your twins accountable for their actions.

Don't Label your kids. Be careful not to mold your twins with your words. Shy. Outgoing. Bossy. Meek. Loving. Sensitive. Aloof. Stand-offish. Smart. Not-so-smart. Athletic. Uncoordinated. Labels last a lifetime. Your twins will either live up or live down to your expectations. ♡

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



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Twinsane Asylum: Life with two sets of twins is a determined assault on the normal

By Pam Eichner

The Hunt: On cat's paws I stalk my unwary prey. I creep ever closer, crouching low and out of sight.

She senses my presence and turns to face me, doe eyes shining. I've been spotted. Now I'll have to chase her, something I'd hoped to avoid. Grasping for her purple turtleneck, I take off in pursuit of my giggling 2-year-old daughter in a desperate attempt to dress her before noon.

Sarah (who can only be described as Martha Stewart meets Godzilla) darts through the living room in fits of laughter, squealing, "Naked, naked!" It's not long before her twin brother is in on the act. In an instant, his diaper-clad behind bounces across the room to join his sister's chant.

"Yo mom, whaddup?" From the depths of downstairs, my identical 16-year-old twin sons emerge, engulfed in the sleepy fog unique to teen-aged males.

A typical morning in my house is underway.

The Shock: When I remarried several years ago, I asked my twin sons, Brian and Andrew, how they felt about the idea of their stepfather and me having a baby. They were not only comfortable, but enthusiastic. I recall Andrew saying, "Cool, mom! But what if it's twins again?" Ah, youth. Being his wizened parent, I explained that twins were a once-in-a-lifetime gift. No one has two sets of twins.

The "twin gods" displayed a bizarre, twisted sense of humor and saw fit to set me straight on this particular point. Not only could two sets of twins happen, it was happening to me. Upon hearing the news I was pregnant with a second set, I did what any rational woman would: Made a bee-line for Starbucks and ordered a scoop of mocha chip ice cream that was the size of my head.

The Anti-Cool: It didn't take me long to realize a houseful of toddlers and teen-agers results in staggering chaos. I considered writing a book about it, but I doubt very much anyone would ever

believe me.

There is remarkable synergy between my sets of twins, manifesting itself when I least expect. This morning I asked young Matthew to pick up his Lego set so we could get to preschool on time. He felt spunky (for a refreshing change) and moved at a snail's pace, sporting his heart-stopping grin. Teenage Andrew put a hand on his little brother's shoulder and said, "Hey, little dude. Not doing what mom asked you to do is the anti-cool." Andrew turned and headed off in pursuit of a bowl of cereal while Matthew diligently began to pick up all of the Legos. I was stunned. The anti-cool? I admit it—I never would have thought of that one.

The "Oh" Kid Theory: I have a scientific theory about twins. Medical science hasn't backed me up on this, but I am comfortable saying that with two sets of twins, my research has been thorough. I believe in every set of twins there is an "Oh" child. This is the kid who defies logic and gravity, the one you seem to spend all day saying "Oh" to. In my first batch, Brian is my "Oh" kid. Matt is the winner in the second set. I was certain Brian would grow up thinking he was Irish, having heard "Oh, Brian!" so often.

If Matthew has done something whacky (and when doesn't he?) he sees me coming and with a smile will say, "Oh, Matt! Oh, Matt!"

Two-By-Two: I never dreamed I'd have two sets of twins. But now that I do, I wouldn't trade places with a normal person for all the Legos on earth. ♡

Pam Eichner lives in the Twinsane Asylum and writes about it regularly. Her articles have appeared previously in TWINS. She and her double-doubles family live in Park City, Utah. Recently Pam has been going Hollywood, acting in a movie entitled "Dark Matter" with Meryl Streep, being released later this year, and landing the lead role of a neurotic mother in "Teenius", an independent film to be released in 2008.



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“Lady, can’t you control your kids?”

In short, no (at least, sometimes)! The long answer: My 4-year-old twins are spirited, curious, energetic, and opinionated.

One vivid example, scarred into my memory, took place at a large bookstore while we were out of town. My son missed his train table. So, for a field trip, I took him and his twin 3-year-old sister to play “Thomas” at the bookstore.

It went beautifully, at first. I purchased my no-fat-grande-latte-with-a-shot-of-sugar-free-something, plopped my butt on one of those cute little kiddie-chairs designed for people 50 pounds or under, and watched my kids cooperate, share and play in a generally delightful manner for almost two hours. Clearly I was a superior modeler of excellent behavior; kids much older than mine were bickering, grabbing and yelling over the engines.

When it came time to leave, I collected the books I’d chosen to purchase. Now, the hard part. My kids were not experienced liner-uppers. They were usually prisoners strapped tightly into their strollers or carts. Having recently outgrown these restraints, however, they were at the forefront of learning “how to stand still and quietly beside

mommy.”

I did the right thing. I explained quietly and calmly what I expected of them. No grabbing flashy chocolates or toy-based merchandise stacked at children’s eye-level all along the line. No running, yelling, rolling in the mud on the floor, or licking surfaces. And it worked! They asked about things and moved around a few feet, but they were spectacularly civilized. Finally my turn to pay came. I smiled at my lovely children, pulled out my credit card and handed it to the cashier.

My son sensed my moment of weakness; he made his move. From the corner of my eye I saw a flash of his blue nylon jacket bolt towards the entrance, where a busy parking lot menaced just outside the doors. If he missed the doorway-to-death he’d end up in Starbucks, where women in high heels and fashionable denim sipped their precariously perched \$6 coffees.

“Shit!” The word flew out of my mouth before I realized there were 10 serious-looking introverts behind me. Dropping my purse on the counter, I made a run for him. My daughter quickly followed. Surprising me, my son stayed inside the store. Reaching the entrance to Starbucks, however, he

threw on the brakes, made a 180-degree turn, and doubled back, weaving around stands near the check-out. Darting between scented candles and greeting cards, my son ducked through the growing line of waiting customers and headed for fiction on the upper level. Hot on his trail was my daughter. Before I could reach them, my 25-pound daughter, dressed head-to-toe in hot pink, flew through the air and tackled her brother to the ground. Beaming, she yelled, “Mommy! Mommy! I caught him!”

“Get up,” I muttered gruffly to my limp and grinning son. When he refused, I grabbed his arm and dragged him along. The three of us took the long “perp-walk” past 15 impatient people in the lengthening line. My daughter trotted along beside, recounting her conquest with enthusiasm.

I gave the cashier a dopey, sheepish, “What-can-you-do-about-kids?” kind of look as she handed me my receipt. She did not smile.

We’re still working on standing still. ♡

Kim Suvan lives in Calgary. She has an M.A. in English Lit. and currently stays at home raising her preschool twins. She plans to return to school to do her Ph.D. when the kids start 1st grade.



Sophie & Gavin Knight



Author and mom Kim Suvan with her twins

Twins can become Tigers, Coyotes and Whales with built-in partners

By Laurie Chance Smith

Twins are lucky! They have a built-in advantage when it comes to learning and doing yoga—a partner. Yoga means “to yoke”—to join or unify.

Yoga is really simple for young kids. And it’s far different from when adults do yoga— it’s much louder and more fun! The Tiger, Coyote, Mountain-Peak, and Whale poses are very easy for young children to follow.

Twins as young as 3 just love learning yoga, and it has many health benefits for little ones’ minds and bodies. Practicing yoga together encourages twins to remain more focused on the activity. With hands or knees touching, many twins will hold the poses longer.

Don’t worry about perfect alignment or smooth transitions between poses. (Are you kidding? Perfect alignment? Smooth transitions? With twins?! Ha!)

Have your kids growl like tigers, howl like coyotes, stand tall like majestic mountains, and relax for sleep by imitating the whale’s blowhole. Okay, let’s give it a try...

TIGER POSE

- **TWIN MOVES:** Have your twins get into a kneeling position, facing each other. Their knees touch, and their backs should be tall and straight. Tell them to curl their fingers like paws and imagine they are twin tigers. Let them rock the house with their growls.
- **TWIN BENEFITS:** Tiger Pose helps develop good posture and strengthens their young legs.
- **TWIN TIPS:** Encourage your twins to rumble loudly and playfully. Kids get stressed, too, and Tiger Pose is a great way to release tension. Face painting adds amusement and helps twins get excited about this pose.



COYOTE POSE

- **TWIN MOVES:** Ask your twins to kneel facing each other and lean forward to place their palms flat on the floor. Encourage your twins to hold their arms straight and push the floor gently with their palms. Tell them to imagine they are

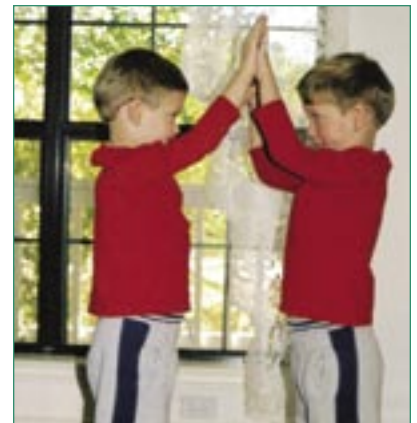
coyotes howling at the moon. They can tip their heads gently back, reach their chins to the sky, and howl!

- **TWIN BENEFITS:** Coyote Pose strengthens the arms, chin, chest, back, and wrists.
- **TWIN TIPS:** Make a game of this pose by asking who can howl louder or hold the pose longer. Ask your twins if they are howling at a full moon, or is it crescent-shaped?



MOUNTAIN-PEAK POSE

- **TWIN MOVES:** Twins should face each other in a standing position. Toes face forward, and feet are about hip-width apart. Ask your twins to reach both arms straight up—palms and fingers should touch those of their twin. Have them hold this pose for 10 seconds or longer.
- **TWIN BENEFITS:** Mountain-Peak Pose develops calmness, aligns the spine, and encourages good posture. Reaching the hands upward strengthens arms, shoulders, and hands.
- **TWIN TIPS:** Touching hands in the mountain peak helps twins focus on staying still. Ask your twins if the sun is shining at the top of the mountain. Or is the mountain peak covered with snow?



WHALE POSE

- **TWIN MOVES:** Ask your twins to lie down side-by-side on their backs. Tell them they are great blue whales swimming through the ocean. Instruct each child to place his palms together (like praying hands) right over their chests. While pressing their palms together, they should reach their arms toward the ceiling. Tell your twins their arms are the waterspouts that shoot out of the whales’



blowholes. They can repeat the “water-blowing” action with their arms three times, or more. Try to go slowly.

- **TWIN BENEFITS:** Lying flat on the back encourages proper alignment of the spine and relaxes the whole body. Whale Pose strengthens the children’s arms and shoulders.
- **TWIN TIPS:** Whale Pose is a good way to wind down in the evening before bed. Ask your children if they have any “mads” or “sads” from the day. Encourage your twins to “blow out” any bad feelings they experienced during the day. ♡

Laurie Chance Smith is a freelance writer, poet and mom of twin boys, 6, Luke and Joshua. They live in Azle, Tex. Laurie has a degree in psychology and a Master’s in social work.

TWinfo

The 60-year-old Saddle River, N.J., woman who gave birth to identical twin boys will be the age of grandmothers of many other moms of twins she meets as her babies grow up. Frieda Birnbaum became the oldest woman ever to deliver twins when her sons arrived May 23 by c-section, weighing 4 lbs. 11 oz. each. Birnbaum is a psychologist who underwent in vitro fertilization last year in Capetown, South Africa, to be able to offer her 6-year-old son siblings closer in age to himself. She and her husband of 38 years, Ken, a New York lawyer, also have a son 33 and a daughter, 29. Most mothers of multiples can’t imagine being retirement age and feeding, diapering, clothing, bathing and managing the chaos of twins at the Birnbaums’ ages. One of Birnbaum’s goals was to eliminate stigma attached to older women giving birth. But what about the twins? How will they feel about having parents much older than those of their friends and relatives? Will the Birnbaum twins have to deal with the deaths of their parents while still relatively young? Will these questions and issues even matter?

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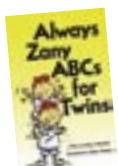
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The twin-jealousy dragon raises its enormous head

PARENTS ASK:

I have noticed that one of my twins gets really jealous when I give attention to the other. I try to divide my time up as equally between the two as possible, but even so, one of the twins always seems to want my attention every time I give it to the other. What do you recommend I do?

JENNIFER'S TAKE:

Ah, twins. Sometimes one is a rock, the other is a hard place, and you're stuck in the middle. This is particularly true when it comes to vying for attention from a parent: As each twin demands your undivided attention, you may find yourself wishing that you, in

fact, were also a twin. When one twin is more aggressive about it than the other, things can really become difficult and you may feel as if you're forced to choose between your children.

I don't know why we twins do this. Like it's not enough trouble to make our parents change double the number of diapers! But, there's just something about being a twin that makes parental attention the apex

For twins, sibling

rivalry is placed atop the "to do" list; if we have no toys to fight over, no names to call each other, and no hair to pull, we always have parental attention to use as our major source of contention.

Looking back, I don't feel as though on a whole my sister or I was more demanding than the other when it came to our parents' attention. But there were definitely instances when one of us became overly aggressive about it.

I remember being sick as a young child and having my mother's attention, only to have my twin come along and do something, anything—stopping just short of performing a song and dance number—to draw attention to herself. Conversely, when my mother was focusing her attention on our younger sister, my twin didn't

behave in this same manner. There was just something about my mom giving attention to me that made my sister jealous.

I believe it comes down to this: Twins know they are individuals. They know they each have their own feelings and their own thoughts. But sometimes this is forgotten by society. Twins become so accustomed to being coupled, being thought of as a pair, that deep down inside they are forced to think of themselves, if even the tiniest bit, as some sort of duo.

Thus, when a parent focuses attention on one, the other sees no reason why she shouldn't be served up the same amount. After all, many twins are so used to getting a lot of the same things—the same clothes, same birthday presents, same grades in school—that if one twin receives attention, the other is virtually programmed to assume she should be receiving attention as well. If it doesn't happen, jealousy sets in. Twins are pre-wired to think everything should be equal.

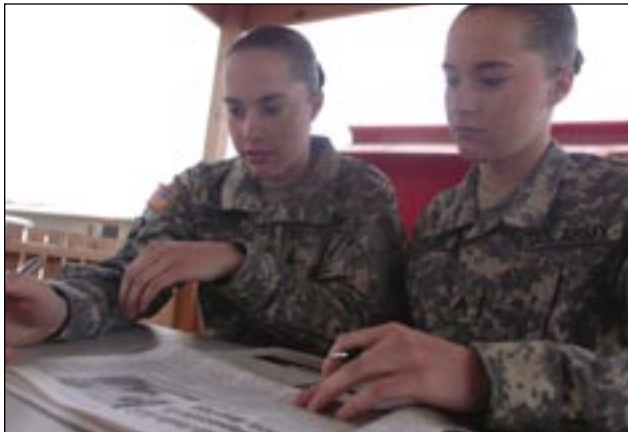
As far as advice goes, for starters know that this will pass. It's a phase. The older twins become, the less they expect to receive all the same things, including the same amount of parental attention. Every year that passes means twins are becoming more independent of each other. By the time I was in middle school, I didn't really mind if my sister got more parental attention than me (especially if she was being yelled at). Every year, both my twin sister and I were a little less concerned with things being equal.

Second, giving one twin more attention when she needs it is okay. That's what parents do with all their children, twins or otherwise. If the other twin becomes jealous and vies for attention, simply explain that their sister or brother needs more attention right now and why. If the jealous twin seems unyielding—unwilling to understand—then compromise: Tell your child you need to pay attention to the other twin right now but later in the day you will spend some alone-time with him or her.

When it comes down to it, remember that vying for your parental attention is nothing too serious. It's just part of sibling rivalry. I don't know about other twins, but sibling rivalry is something about which my twin sister and I wrote the book: We are still waiting for the royalty checks from our publisher. ♡

Jennifer, 27, lives in Aurora, Colo., and works as a graphic designer. Her twin, Kimberly, is now nearby, having recently returned to Aurora from Portland, Ore.

Twin sisters serve in Iraq, savor time together in Kuwait



Sgt. Tasha Gerken is left-handed. It's an important bit of information if you want any chance of distinguishing her from Sgt. Ashley Gerken, her twin. Of course, the sisters say there are plenty of differences. "You wouldn't want two Tashas," said Ashley, smiling. "It's better than two Ashleys," her sister retorts jokingly. Deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, the Iowa-born twins drive trucks in the 217th Transportation Co. supporting 3rd Army/U.S. Army Central.

Ashley and Tasha, virtually indistinguishable from each other to the casual observer, sometimes play tricks on members of their unit. Tasha's squad leader, Staff Sgt. Timmie Wilkins, approaches to relay information to her, unaware the person he's talking to isn't Tasha. "It's confusing," said Wilkins. "I go up and talk to this one [pointing at Ashley], and she'll just let me go on and on..." "I have to get the same information twice," quipped Tasha.

Ashley recalls a time in high school when a fellow she was dating became confused. "Her boyfriend got mixed up after [Ashley] left the room," said Tasha, "and he came up to me and starting touching my leg and hugging me. I was like, 'Um, hellooooo?'"

The Gerken sisters' Army career began in Manson, Iowa, located in the northwestern part of the state, after their junior year at Manson Northwest Webster High School when they left for Basic Training. They went to Advanced Individual Training upon graduating the following year.

The sisters' primary mission is actually far from Kuwait: The twins drive heavy equipment transporters, distributing cargo to various camps in Iraq, a dangerous job. Their unit ensures the Gerken sisters are never in the same convoy while in Iraq. With such a rule in place, the Gerken sisters see each other only infrequently, even though deployed to the same camp. Ashley and Tasha aren't used to being away from each other so much; the first time one went on a mission in Iraq was the longest they'd ever been separated in their lives.

"Back home, we spend every minute together," said Ashley. "We spend a lot less time together here because of [the mission]." During times of separation, family members remind the sisters to

keep in touch with family back home, and also with each other. "I'll get e-mails from mom," said Ashley, "and she will say, 'Tasha misses you. E-mail her.'"

When they're together at Camp Arifjan, the sisters take advantage of it. "We don't spend much time away from each other when we're both here," said Ashley. "We're lucky to have family here, and we're best friends."

Ashley and Tasha consider themselves unique—they rarely argue, and jealousy isn't an issue, "except when I get more comments on [the Website] Myspace," laughs Ashley. "[Tasha] gets kind of jealous when that happens. She says, 'Why did mom leave you a comment and not me?'"

When the two discuss future plans, those normally include each other. After their redeployment, they plan to settle in El Paso, Tex., which they "fell in love with" while mobilized at nearby Fort Bliss. Their dream is to buy several acres, build a ranch, and breed horses.

—Contributed by Sgt. Chris Jones
40th Public Affairs Detachment, US Army

Calling all calendar-kids!

The Fetal Hope Foundation is producing its 2008 TTTS Celebration of HOPE Calendar and wants photos of children who have survived TTTS or other fetal syndromes such as Acardiac Twinning (known as TRAP sequence), Amniotic Band Syndrome (ABS), Intrauterine Growth Restriction (IUGR), and Fetal Lower Urinary Tract Obstruction (FLUTO). Parents may submit more than one photo, and seasonal photos are welcome! Deadline for submissions is July 31, 2007.

Parents who have lost babies to these syndromes are invited to submit their "angels" names for inclusion in the calendar's special memorial section.

The Fetal Hope Foundation (www.fetalhope.org) uses the calendar sales as a fundraiser. The foundation's 2007 calendar sales resulted in the sale of nearly 700 calendars, which helps further the organization's mission of supporting and educating families diagnosed with fetal conditions, especially those affecting multiples in utero. FHF also creates awareness of TTTS and fetal syndromes through its national events, including the TTTS Race for Hope held in seven cities around the U.S. each year.

Send digital photos to lonnie@fetalhope.org and put CALENDAR in the subject line, or mail photos to Fetal Hope Foundation at 9786 So. Holland St., Littleton, CO 80127, Attn: Calendar. Include names of children and age(s) at time of photo. Digital photos must be min. 600dpi resolution. All photos submitted by email or USPS must have a completed/signed photo release form mailed (hard copy) to the Foundation at the address above. No pictures can be used if not matched with a signed release. The form is available at www.TwinsMagazine.com in "Double Takes" or at <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/photorelease.html>.

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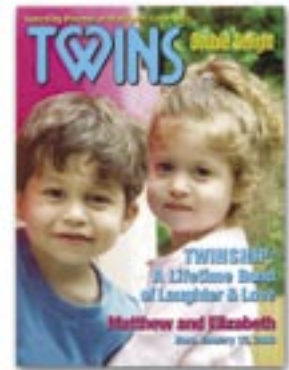
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Attack of the clones

By Philippe Murat

I still haven't figured out exactly what happened. Our home has been invaded by aliens. We invited them in, actually, but that was before we learned they were from another planet.

It started innocently enough. My wife went to the hospital to have her belly checked. She lay on a bed and a nurse applied transparent jelly to her abdomen. I sat beside her and as technicians fiddled with medical instruments, I watched a black-and-white TV program in which two astronauts in a Gemini appeared to orbit Earth. We were given some pictures from this show to take home.

A few months later, my wife returned to the hospital and was rushed to an operating room. Hours later, we were introduced to two little creatures who looked like the astronauts I had seen on TV. But this time they were in full color. Hospital personnel asked us to take them home, so we did. We didn't want to make a fuss.

Our family already included a child, a human one, that is. We know she is human because 4 years earlier, she'd been delivered by a stork. We believed the bird was a bit disoriented, so for her own safety, we kept the baby.

A few weeks elapsed after we took the two new creatures home. A physician told us tests had been performed—they were females, identical. She referred to them as clones. This is when I realized we had been invaded by extra-terrestrials.

The clones looked so similar we had to dress one in yellow and the other in red to tell them apart. They were extremely hard to take care of, mainly because there were two of

them. They made funny noises and kept us awake at night. We fed them and they started to grow—doctors hadn't warned us they would get bigger.

Although they landed in the same space ship, the clones seemed at first not to know each other. But when they started to communicate, they used a very sophisticated language. They also observed us closely, probably to study our species because they were imitating some things we did.

To test our theory, we bought toys mimicking things we use in daily life—kitchen stuff and musical instruments. We also gave our creatures a few other objects to see if they had any mathematical skills. As it turned out, they mastered the art of piling blocks to form complex structures. As they grew, we gave them material with which to draw; the result was the creation of a unique art form.

We carried out other experiments with our clones. For instance, we showed them videos of earthlings most likely to interest them: Little people. Their reactions made us realize they had some talent for singing, although not always able to reproduce lyrics exactly as performed on TV.

The invasion of clones has had a huge impact on our lives. We've considered taking the creatures back to the hospital, but we figured it wouldn't be fair to the staff. It was highly improbable hospital people

would know from

whence the clones came, either.

Besides, we've become attached to them.

So we've decided to treat them like real humans. Thirty-six months after their arrival, we are working at raising them. We've begun teaching them earthly languages, but they use their own private language most of the time. Our older daughter seems to understand their communications and translates when we need help.

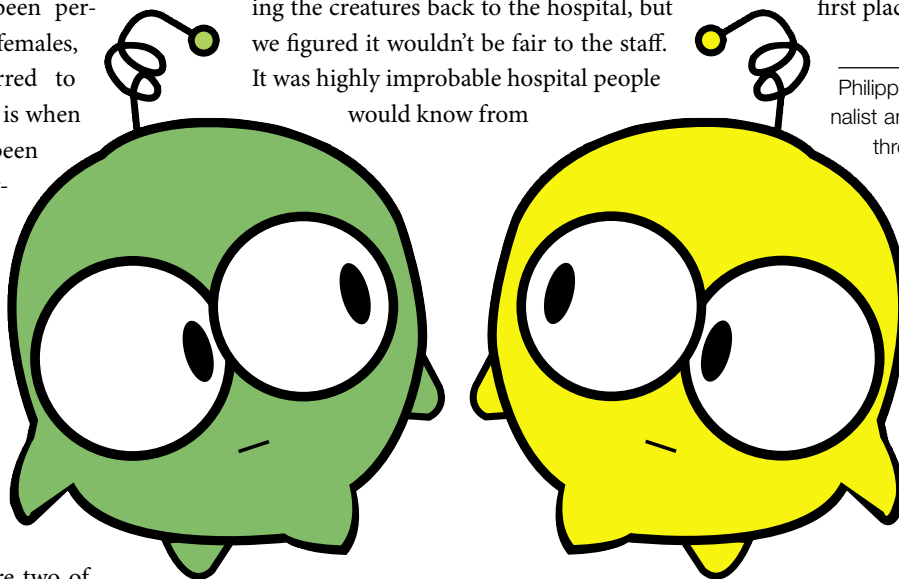
The clones are becoming more and more like humans all the time. They gave us nicknames—Mama and Daddy. We take them to daycare, pretending they are human toddlers.

My wife laughs when I insist they are cloned aliens. To me, they remain invaders from another planet who changed our lives completely. Maybe one day I'll understand how they made us fall in love with them the minute we saw them on the black-and-white TV show at the hospital, and why they had made us so tired and yet so happy.

When they speak our language fluently, perhaps they will explain where they came from and why they were acting the way they did when we first met them.

Most importantly, we'd like to know why they chose to invade our home in the first place.

Philippe Murat is a Canadian journalist and a still-amazed father of three, including identical twin girls. He still believes the twins came from another planet.



GENERAL PARENTING

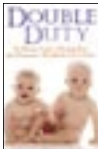
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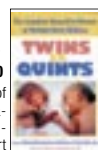
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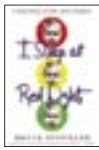
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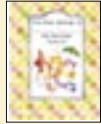


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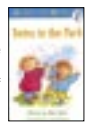
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Illustrations, Marcela Cabrera
Teacher Miss Hannah and Bumpy and Boo's mother take the class and the twin brothers on a field trip to the eye doctor. Dr. Grant gives each of the boys an eye examination, and discovers that one of the twins needs to 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.**



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Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Families... with Twins, Multiples and Singletons

Compiled and Edited by Susan M. Heim
Cartoon artistry by John M. Byrne

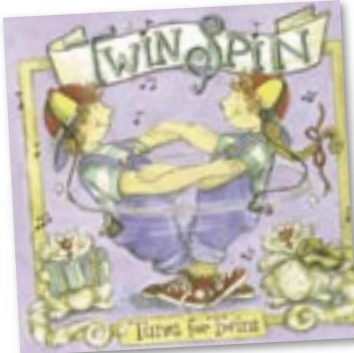
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"Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Families ... with Twins, Multiples, and Singletons," published in conjunction with

TWINS™ Magazine, is a compilation of 82 inspiring stories written by parents and other family members about the joys and challenges of raising multiples. These true tales reflect a variety of topics, such as the special bond between multiples, typical crazy days in the life of a family with twins, challenges encountered in pregnancy or childhood, humorous situations created by multiples, adopting twins, and much more. If you're the parent of twins or triplets, you'll love these heart-warming and encouraging stories. This book also makes a great gift for those who are expecting or raising multiples! *Paperback, 222 pages.*

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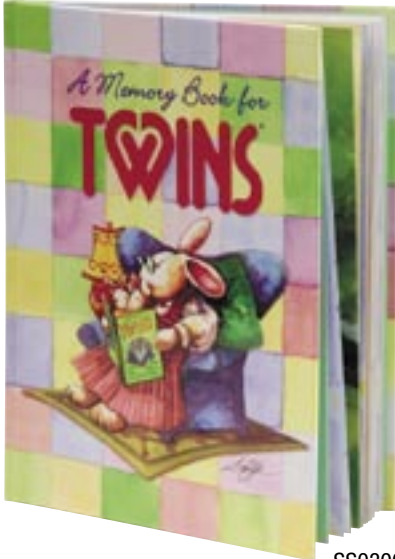
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TWIN HEARTS

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

As days passed and months moved on,
I prayed for two, born safe and strong.
Thrilled by the promise of the joys to-be,
Like two voices joined in ABC's.
Shared sweet kisses on cheeks and lips,
Two toddlers riding atop two hips.

I promise to see you each as one,
Two connected, yet free lives begun.
Both loved completely, for all they are,
Following their own bright star.

I promise to encourage your treasured bond,
from babies to children and beyond.
Partners, soul mates and best friends,
The love of each of you will depend.
At last I stroke each newborn face,
I knew my heart was touched by grace.
My hands now full—as most will say,
Yet my life never richer than today.

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



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- A. Fingers - SF90035 \$39.99 each
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A. 12"-x-15"



B. 12"-x-15"

Twin Blessing Photo Frame

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

SF06004 \$24.99 each



Melissa and Doug

Noah's Ark and Circus Train Photo Frames

Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created these colorful hand-painted Noah's Ark and Circus Train solid-wood table-top frames. These beautifully crafted frames will compliment any nursery or home. (Overall size of Noah's Ark is 11" x 9 1/2". Circus Train is 14" x 10 1/2") They each hold three, 2 1/8" x 2 1/8" photographs.

SF05001 Noah's Ark \$19.99 each

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"Discover Wildlife, Raise Twins" Ceramic Wall Plaque

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

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Twice as Nice Photo Frame

This unique ceramic frame from Russ Baby will look fabulous on your dresser, bookcase, shelf or fireplace mantle. The frame has glass insert and is flocked backing, providing an unique opportunity to show off your twins. A beautiful, wonderful

gift to celebrate the birth of your twins for a close family member or even for yourself. Frames are individually boxed. Twice as Nice Photo Frame is 4 1/2" x 6" and holds two 1 3/4" x 2 3/4" photographs.

SF04002 Stars and Hearts \$12.99 each

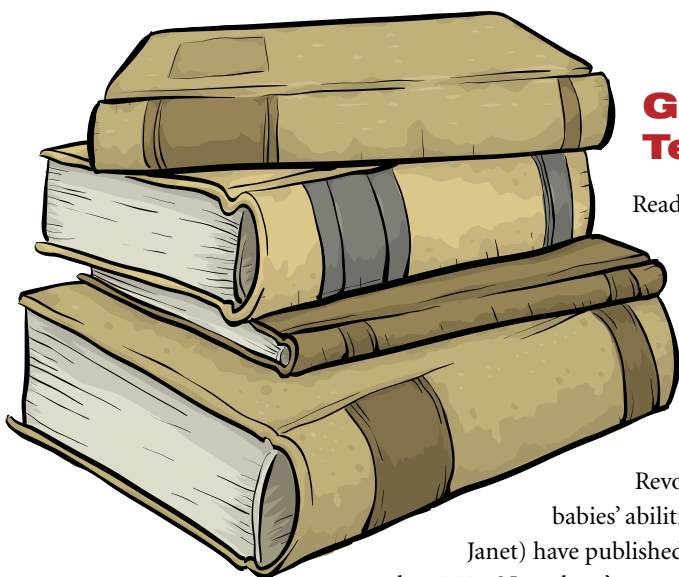


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Give your twins a jump start: Teach them to read as infants

Reading to babies from infancy helps them become smarter, brighter children. Have you heard that if you teach your twin infants to recognize the written word at the same time they are learning the spoken word, they can actually learn to read before their first birthday? It's true, and it's amazing! Babies' brains are hardwired for instant learning, and these baby-brains are at their peak of readiness from the moment of birth, despite infants' inability to communicate verbally. Glenn Doman, PhD, concluded this years ago, and used his knowledge to launch what became known as "The Gentle Revolution," a significant movement focused on training parents to multiply their babies' abilities to move, think, read, do math, etc. The Domans (Glenn and his daughter

Janet) have published a number of books, including *How to Teach Your Baby To Read*, starting in the 1990s. Now there's a new book, *Your Baby Can Read* by Robert Titzer, PhD, that piggybacks on the

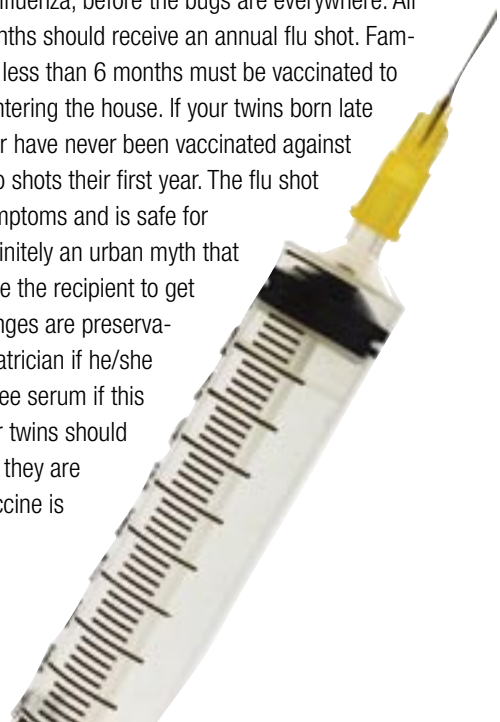
Domans' works, and buttresses the concept of teaching infants to do the things parents have long thought were only successful when children grew older. Titzer's program, like that of the Domans, uses multi-sensory techniques to teach children as young as 3 months to read. Using whole language, phonics and a combination of sound, sight and interaction, Titzer helps parents teach their twins to read at very early ages, giving them a jump start on confidence and self-esteem. For more information on this program go to www.YourBabyCan.com

Twin infant teeth

Establish good dental habits early—start during infancy. Breastmilk and formula both contain high amounts of sugar that coats the gums and sets the stage for dental "caries" (baby cavities) to develop. Help prevent future dental problems for twin infants by simply wiping off their gums with a soft-bristled tooth brush or clean cloth a couple times each day. Make this a habit after completing morning and nighttime feedings. As baby teeth begin to emerge, use a soft-bristled brush with only a tiny amount of kid-toothpaste or water. Avoid adult toothpaste until your twins understand how to spit. Too much fluoride can cause permanent tooth stains. By the age of 2, your twins should have their teeth brushed one to two times daily with your help. You can prevent baby cavities by giving your twin infants bottles only during mealtime. Teach your twins to drink from a cup by their first birthday, clean their gums and teeth daily, and never, ever put your twin infants to bed with a bottle! A lot of sugary fruit juice is bad. Plain water to drink for thirst is much better.

AVOIDING THE FLU

As a mother of twins, you quickly learn two things about "sick season"—the first is, two sick kids are worse than one. Second, if you're lucky enough to only have one sick twin, it's only a matter of time before you end up with two. Keep your twins healthy by immunizing them in the fall against influenza, before the bugs are everywhere. All children older than 6 months should receive an annual flu shot. Family members of twin infants less than 6 months must be vaccinated to prevent influenza from entering the house. If your twins born late last year or early this year have never been vaccinated against the flu, they will need two shots their first year. The flu shot will not cause flu-like symptoms and is safe for nursing mothers. (It's definitely an urban myth that getting the shot will cause the recipient to get the flu.) Single-dose syringes are preservative-free—ask your pediatrician if he/she is using a preservative-free serum if this is a concern for you. Your twins should not receive the flu shot if they are allergic to eggs—the vaccine is grown using eggs.



ENDLESS QUEST FOR A NIGHT'S SLEEP, WITH TWINS!



Anabel and Levi, 3 months

Getting a good night's sleep is an everlasting quest for mothers of multiples. The day is over, dishes finally put away, house re-assembled. You're exhausted. But you still face the nightly bedtime battle.

The key to changing this routine: Be consistent, persistent, patient. It is reasonable to expect healthy twins to sleep through most of the night, without needing to eat, by 8-9 months. If this isn't happening for you, it is probably because your twin infants now have a learned behavior.

Twin infants should NOT be put to bed after they are asleep. They should be placed in their own cribs while drowsy, yet awake. Second, establish a predictable bedtime routine—when you begin the routine, your twins know bedtime follows. Your bedtime goodbye should be simple—kiss your twin infant goodnight and tuck her in, then leave the room. If she cries, wait a full 5 minutes before responding. Help her lie back down, kiss and tuck her in again, leave the room.

This works best if you do NOT pick up your child while at the bedside. Wait another full 5 minutes before returning to the bedside. Repeat as needed, slowly increasing the time you wait before entering and re-tucking, until your twin infant is asleep. On your first night, this may take over an hour.

For all parents, it's a difficult process. You might even cry. But be patient; each night it will take your children less time to fall asleep alone. Tricky with multiples sharing a room—yet, after a few nights, most twins sleep through each other's complaints. Most parents who are consistent and persistent with this process have their twin infants falling asleep on their own, and remaining in their own beds, in less than a week.

Helpful hint: Sometime after 5 months of age, introduce a transitional object such as a small stuffed animal, for comfort. Incorporate this object into your bedtime routine and encourage your twin infant to cuddle and seek comfort from this item.

Send Growing Stages questions to mom of twins Kelly Woods, kwoods@lightblast.net. Kelly is a pediatric and family nurse practitioner with identical boys, Aidan and Bailey, 2. They live in central Minnesota.

TWinfo

Sleeping with your baby has been the norm for almost all cultures and societies throughout almost all ages...until so-called "experts" in the late 20th century began warning moms not to do this for safety reasons, and made mothers of newborns feel guilty about it. Now, James J. McKenna, PhD, offers the real scoop—trusted and authoritative advice from a recognized authority on cosleeping in *Sleeping with Your Baby: A Parent's Guide to Cosleeping*. McKenna, director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Lab at the University of Notre Dame, separates myths from reality and gives clear science, sensible advice, and easy-to-follow guidance for parents. Above all, McKenna says there are ways for mothers and babies to safely cosleep, whether bedsharing or not. What's more, there are very real benefits of cosleeping. (Platypus Media, paperback, 128 pgs., \$14.95)

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sample of 2-page spread

∴ **Boating** >>>
today,
waterskiing
tomorrow!



1∴ Cole and Conner
3 years
Great Falls, MT

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?



2∴ Hanna and Julia
5 months
Atlanta, GA



3∴ Ben and Drew
5 years
Jupiter, FL



4∴ Madalyn and Olivia
3 years
Combined Locks, WI



5∴ Alexis and Jenna
17 months
Warren, NJ



6∴ Hannah and Haley
4 years
Kingsport, TN



7∴ Jalen and Jaden
1 year
Milwaukee, WI



8∴ Colson and Corgan
3 years
Houston, TX



9∴ Grace and Lily
9 months
Webster, MA



10∴ Bradley and Brooke
4 years
Mays Landing, NJ



11:: Mckayla and Reese
7 months
Winter Park, FL



12:: Mick and Mitchell
4 years
Katy, TX



13:: Lane and Luke
10 months
Magnolia, TX



14:: Eli and Fin
2 years
Fairbanks, AK



15:: Kate and Riley
8 months
Clarksville, TN



16:: Lucas and Ezekiel
20 months
Winston-Salem, NC



17:: Chelsea and Cailee
2 years
Folsom, CA



18:: Jack and Bo
3 months
Scottsdale, AZ



19:: Kaitlyn and Olivia
7 months
St. Joseph, MI



20:: Addison and Avery
3 years
Royston, GA

Photo Tips

What we are looking for:

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

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

ZD - 02	ZM - 15	ZD - 10	ZM - 5
ZM - 61	ZD - 14	ZD - 9	ZM - 4
ZD - 18	ZD - 13	ZD - 8	ZD - 3
ZD - 17	ZD - 12	ZD - 7	ZM - 2
ZM - 16	ZM - 11	ZD - 6	ZM - 1

Based on parental reports:

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Nap-time fades into history

By Lauren Kafka



I knew the footsteps were too heavy to be a squirrel or a mouse. They followed an odd pattern—a few seconds of scurrying followed by a thud. I suspected someone was having trouble sleeping.

Julian hated to stay in his room alone after a nap; he craved companionship. But Adrienne sometimes woke up and sang silly songs or recited complicated monologues. She seemed content in her pastel-colored room, oblivious to the fact that anyone might be eavesdropping on her performances.

Adrienne usually waited patiently in bed for me to let her know nap-time was over, but today she had energy to burn. I peeked through the door crack. She was running laps from one side of her room to the other. The thuds occurred when she stopped herself by slamming her hands against the wall. She tried to muffle her giggles.

When I opened the door to let her know I was in on the scam, she was so engrossed she didn't notice me at first. Then she looked startled and flashed a sheepish, guilty grin—a mix of pride for the ingenuity of her secret activity and fear of the consequences.

"I'm having trouble sleeping," she said

in a low-pitched monotone, fighting back a smile.

"How about if you get back into bed and look at a book?" I asked.

"I don't want to," she said.

"Would you like me to tickle your back?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, as she burrowed under her covers. "Tickle my back."

"Can you ask nicely?" I asked.

"May you please tickle my back?" she asked.

"Okay, but just until you fall asleep."

Fifteen minutes later, Adrienne was asleep. Only minutes later, so was I.

I awoke with a start at 4:00 p.m. to Julian's cries, having paid no bills, prepared no dinner, washed no dishes, done no laundry, completed no editorial assignments.

The next day I heard more bizarre sounds—falling objects, perhaps?—emanating from Adrienne's room. I peeked. She sat cross-legged atop her headboard bookshelf flipping the pages of a book. A bunch of toys lay scattered about her on the floor, which she'd discarded to make room for herself.

"I couldn't sleep, so I'm reading," she said, self-satisfied. She sounded as though she'd been an avid reader for many years, though we both knew she couldn't read.

"Well that's fine. But why are you on top of your bookshelf?" I asked. "You could hurt yourself. Could you read the book in bed?"

She reluctantly agreed. I closed the Venetian blinds she had opened and asked why she couldn't sleep.

"It's too light outside," she said. "You're

not supposed to sleep until it's dark."

"If you keep the blinds closed, it will be darker," I explained. She didn't buy it. As soon as I left, I heard her dash to open them.

Nap-time was a precious time of day for me, but I realized its days were numbered. The next afternoon I suggested Adrienne try a quiet activity in her room instead of sleeping. I didn't want Julian to figure out Adrienne's rest period had become play-time. He clearly still needed to nap, but he was becoming suspicious.

To convince Julian he wasn't missing out on anything, we pretended Adrienne was getting ready for nap-time, though we both knew she wouldn't sleep. The rule was she had to stay in her room 15 minutes. Then I'd come upstairs to let her know she could tiptoe to the family room.

Often she couldn't wait that long. Soon after Julian was in bed and drifting off, she appeared in the kitchen or my office to let me know she was ready for fun. She loved being in on our secret that nap-time wasn't really nap-time.

We came up with some entertaining projects, and she figured out this was one of the best times of day because she didn't have to share me.

A month later, Julian peeked through the crack in his bedroom door muttering all kinds of excuses for postponing sleep.

"I'm thirsty," he said. "I have to go to the potty, and I don't need a nap."

That day I knew it was official. My peaceful, invaluable, productive time block from 1:30-3:30 was no longer mine. Nap-time was undeniably history. ♥

Lauren Kafka, mother of 9-year-old boy/girl twins, attends George Washington University's graduate education program. She will soon be licensed to teach English as a second language.

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