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### COVER-KIDS

Courtney and Heidi, born April 18, 2006, enjoy swimming, camping, hiking, and climbing at playgrounds near their home in Highlands Ranch, Colo. They love dancing to Little Einsteins, Keith Urban, and '80s music with their older sister, Holley, 5. Visits to "Gramma and Belle's House" are favorite adventures, as well as visiting other family and friends.



Cover photography by Glen Covalli



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**AH, THE START OF ANOTHER YEAR THAT PROMISES TO BE QUITE EXCITING!**

...though I must say every year is quite exciting—whether you're the “parent” of TWINS™ or the parents of twins!

Have you thought about any “resolutions” for 2008? I haven't. Who has time to think about resolutions? Except, that is, to mutter to yourself, while on the run, such things as... “I am going to be more serene this year.” “I will never spread myself so thin again, I swear.” “I have to stop saying ‘Yes’ to everything people ask me to do for them.” And, most important (and most frequently recurring) of all... “I promise to eat healthier, eliminate junk food from my life, and drop 15 extra pounds this year” and “I will get down on the floor every day with my twins and do 20 ‘ab-crunches’ to rid myself of twin-flab.” All good promises, worthy of personal investment. Also, sure to pop up on our personal agendas next year, too. Oh, well.

Let's take a look at what's going to be happening in our twinny world during 2008. My Top 10 predictions for the year ahead are...

Yes, I foresee  
knee-slapping,  
jaw-dropping  
changes coming  
in 2008

**# 10:** Father of twins and doctoral candidate Jamie Grime will issue a highly-credible, definitive report on the documented effects of forced separation of twins in school (see story, page 10) setting the stage for widespread—and welcome!—changes in how schools handle twin placements



**# 9:** Thousands of parents of twins nationwide will be buying, selling and finding their family's supplies and equipment—new and used—via the new, automated TWINS™ Online Classifieds @ [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com)

**# 8:** Premature births of twins will plummet because many more women expecting twins will educate themselves about the proper calories and protein they need when expecting twins and the weight they need to gain early in pregnancy...and they'll increasingly question whether their obstetricians are up-to-date on medical advice re twin-pregnancy

*Susan Alt*

**# 7:** A much higher percentage of identical twin-fetuses at risk for TTTS *in utero* will be identified by means of earlier ultrasounds, and will survive as a result of more frequent monitoring during pregnancy

**# 6:** TWINS™ will again be named one of the Top 30 magazines published in the U.S. (3rd time in 10 years), essential reading for parents of twins and triplets

**# 5:** A mother of five sets of twins will send her story to TWINS™ for publication

**# 4:** Families with twins will be the focus of a major study that follows children whose parents do not expose their kids to any TV or videos until they are at least 4 years old, and it will reveal that these children seldom if ever are diagnosed with autism

**# 3:** A highly gifted twin-mompreneur will launch an enterprise enabling moms of twins to work from home, generating \$40,000/year incomes working three hours/day

**# 2:** At least 6 more states will pass “twins in school” laws giving parents greater power to determine classroom placement for their young twins and triplets, including New York and Massachusetts

**# 1:** A “rocket scientist” will invent a twin-mommy robot named UB-Mee2 that will be able to follow a mom of twininfants for only a 24-hour period, then replicate her actions to change diapers, bathe babies, clothe babies, do laundry, clean house, and cook meals, leaving the real mom free to cuddle her cuties, breastfeed leisurely, and take a few naps.

I can't wait, can you? (OK, I'll admit some of these are tongue-in-cheek!)

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## FIND THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE ORDINARY

Ten years ago, I became the mother of twins—a boy, Austin, and a girl, Addison. No mother of multiples ever has it easy, but we really had it hard—my son was born with a rare birth defect. Austin had a tracheal esophageal fistula with atresia—his esophagus did not connect to his stomach; it ended in a bind-pouch. Austin's esophagus came up from his stomach and improperly connected to his trachea.

This led to surgery when he was one day old and only 3 pounds. The surgeon disconnected his esophagus from his trachea and connected it to his stomach, then repaired the hole in his trachea, which led to breathing problems. Austin also has tracheal malacia—a weak, floppy trachea prone to causing breathing issues and asthma. His esophagus was narrow at the connection, requiring esophageal dilations just so he could eat soft foods.

Austin experienced terrible reflux from the repair. Addison, his twin sister, was born very small but did not have any medical issues beyond the typical preemie stuff.

I wrote about Austin's nearly-constant difficulties in TWINS™ Magazine about two years after the kids were born, and wanted to update readers on all that has transpired since then. Austin has spent time in the hospital for pneumonia five times. He was a frequent visitor to hospital emergency rooms for breathing problems and has undergone multiple procedures at the hospital (dilations, endoscopies, bronchoscopies, etc.).

The births and the medical issues defined my life for many years: I was simply the mother of twins and nothing more. I hadn't the time or energy to be anything else.

Then, about the time Austin and Addison turned 3, I started to take an interest in more than my children. I

pursued my Master's degree and started getting out of the house more. For three years, things got easier—the twins started school and took up sports, usually a different sport every season. They were often on the same teams and I looked forward to each Saturday when I could watch them play: baseball, basketball, golf or whatever.

Austin still had breathing and eating problems as he and Addison grew older. Our biggest concern now, only recently discovered, is Austin's fused, pelvic kidney (a defect of his ureter) as well as his hypospadias (repaired this past summer). The kidney defect was found by accident last year. We will follow his kidney issues with frequent ultrasounds and doctor visits. So far, things are functioning normally. With the addition of the kidney and ureter defects, Austin is now considered a VATER-syndrome kid. (VATER is a term used for kids who have multiple birth defects.)

I'd been told years earlier that Austin would probably outgrow many of his difficulties—his immune system eventually would become strong enough to deflect sicknesses that plagued him when younger. Along the way, I've become more adept at handling medical issues, such as the recent discoveries. I don't get as upset any more. I make sure I'm well informed before any medical procedure or test. I'm better at detecting Austin's sicknesses in early stages now, and getting help before it turns worse. When Austin develops pneumonia or bronchitis, we care for him at home with antibiotics and steroids. He hasn't had a hospital stay since he was 4.

More importantly, we all made sure we had adequate emotional and physical outlets, which helped us heal in the wake of difficulties we faced early on. The kids started sports, I worked on my Master's degree, and my husband began coaching varsity sports again.

Then something immensely joyous and scary happened—I learned I was pregnant. My husband and I had

**I've just returned from the annual conference of the International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology, in Italy. I learned while there that in Europe if you are diagnosed with MCDA (monochorionic, diamniotic) twins you are immediately categorized as "high risk" and receive weekly ultrasounds from then on. As the Fetal Intervention Coordinator here at Texas Children's Fetal Center, I am constantly reminded that MCDA twins are routinely being missed or misdiagnosed. I would like to start a campaign (to educate women) that if you find out you are having twins, obtain an early ultrasound. If you have two placentas, congratulations! But if you have only one placenta, you need weekly ultrasounds. More babies die every year from TTTS than die from SIDS! How can we stop or reduce this?**

KAREN MOISE, RN  
FETAL INTERVENTION COORD.  
TEXAS CHILDREN'S FETAL CENTER  
BAYLOR MEDICAL CENTER  
HOUSTON, TEX.  
VIA EMAIL

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decided not to have more kids after the twins were born. Don't get me wrong, we loved our twins, but we couldn't fathom having two more or even one more with a birth defect similar to our son's. Instead of allowing myself to dwell on the negative—what might go wrong—my personal decision was to



Austin and Addison with younger brother Tanner

leave the past alone and concentrate on enjoying this pregnancy and new baby.

I'm the mother of a single baby this time: Tanner was born exactly seven years after the twins' births (to the week!). Austin and Addison waited all night in the hospital's recliner for Tanner's birth. We welcomed this little surprise with open arms and loving hearts. He weighed exactly 8 pounds, had no medical problems, and hit each milestone on time.

Addison took to Tanner as if he was all hers. Austin, though a bit jealous, was glad to have a brother to boss around and talk sports with.

I realized this is how the extraordinary can be found in the ordinary. There's nothing special about my kids or my family; we are simply ordinary... and that's what is so wonderful!

I smile every day now. I love being a mother. I am more relaxed and at ease. I take problems in stride rather than dwell on them. And I take the time to enjoy each moment. I didn't arrive here the way I planned on the path I envisioned; I am here nonetheless and wouldn't change a thing.

I realize now the twins brought out so many traits I didn't know I

had—strength, patience, organization, unconditional love. Tanner taught me to put myself first sometimes, slow down, and smile. We needed him to complete our family. I needed him to remind me how lucky I am, how extraordinarily lucky.

DONNA RIZER  
PEORIA, ARIZONA  
VIA EMAIL

### TWINS-TOGETHER LEADS TO EXCELLENCE LATER

I am the mother of 4-year-old identical twin boys and I would like information about getting a bill passed in Connecticut regarding parents' rights to decide about separating twins in the classroom, or keeping them together. Can you please head me in the right direction? Our pre-k has separated my twins for two hours in the afternoon and it seems to be working out okay. However, I would like them together in kindergarten and grades 1 through 5. P.S. I have first-hand knowledge that keeping twins together in the classroom leads to excellence later on in life. My twin brothers were together for most of their schooling and both are extremely successful business owners.

CARMELLA COFRANCESCO  
CONN.  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: Your best bet is to go to [www.twinslaw.com](http://www.twinslaw.com) and find out what is happening in your state, and get in touch with the movers and shakers in your twins-community via that site.*

### TWO SETS AND COUNTING

I was reading my most recent copy of TWINS™, and there was a letter from a mom with two sets of twins 11 months apart (Sept./Oct., 2007), She was wondering how she was ever going to leave the home again.

I also have two sets of twins, but mine are 13 months apart, to the day! When my husband and I found out we were having a second set of twins, we let our close friends know the exciting

news. My biggest concern was how I was going to go anywhere with four small children. I have a minivan, so I needed a stroller that would fold, fit into the van, fit through doorways, and hold four kids—not a small request.

One of my close friends found a website for "Foundations quad stroller." It was the answer to my prayers. It is wonderful. I have never seen another stroller like it, and neither has anyone else. It fits through all (standard) doorways, folds up easily, and fits into the back of the van. It is heavy, 65 lbs., but



Marianne's mother with her two sets of grand-twins

what do you expect when you need to carry four children?

Until just recently, I never went anywhere outside of the house and yard alone. If you know some teenagers about 11 or 12 years old, they are a great help. They love to hold babies, change diapers, and are strong enough to help with toddlers, too. Grandmas love outings, too. I always made sure when we left the house it was close to naptime so they would sleep in the van. Always take a carafe of hot water with you so you can heat bottles if you aren't breastfeeding. When we go shopping we make sure it was a mall with everything in it so it was one-stop shopping. You only want to unload and reload the children once.

continued on page 8



# End Problem Diaper Rash!

*More Satisfied Customers*



*"I just wanted to say thank you for making such a GREAT product!! I have 8 month old twin girls who have battled bad diaper rash for months. One had it so bad she would scream every time I changed her diaper. I tried EVERY type of over the counter cream. Nothing seemed to work. Finally the doctor recommended Triple Paste, and POOF! One diaper change later there was already a MAJOR difference! I will NEVER purchase another brand, and I've even purchased some for my two pregnant friends. I would recommend your product in a heartbeat. Thank you for making such a great product to soothe my daughters' sore rear ends."*

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

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Never do anything if you are in a hurry. With two sets of twins, everything takes 4X longer than before. I made myself a t-shirt with a computer-generated iron-on that said "MOMMY OF TWINS... x 1 x 2, and put their pictures on it, too. This really stops people from asking too many stupid questions. They are going to stare anyway—they need something to stare at.

My girls are 2 now, and the babies are nearly 1. Things are getting easier. The girls can walk to the van on their own, and they love to go shopping. They can feed themselves, and drink from juice cups (no more need for bottles). Loading everybody up to go shopping still takes a lot longer than it did with one or two, but I've learned patience. I don't do any of my big shopping alone, but I do get out as often as I need and want to. I'm dreading winter, snowsuits, warm boots and so on—everything will take longer again. But I wouldn't change a day of my life. I love watching the children grow up together, and I love seeing how they are become playmates and friends. There is nothing like the tender moments they share together.

MARIANNE MASLANKO  
VIA EMAIL

### WORKING MOM OF TWINS

As a single mom of twin toddlers, I don't have the option to not work. In looking for mom friends who have small kids it's become clear to me that most "mom" groups (and this includes the multiples groups) are almost completely skewed towards stay-at-home moms. I can think of many times when I would have liked to find a playgroup that met on the weekends.

ALICIA SCHWARCZ  
VIA EMAIL

### TWIN SISTERS 93 YEARS YOUNG, IN WISCONSIN

I am looking for survival rates in twins, specially from Wisconsin. My mother and her fraternal twin sister are 93 years

young (Sept. 14, 2007). I am wondering if that is quite an accomplishment, or if other twins out there have lived just as long. I have looked numerous places to find records for the oldest surviving twins in Wisconsin, but keep coming up empty. My mother, Edna Reysen and her twin sister, Ella Gessner, were born and raised on a farm in Washington County, Wisc., just 1 mile north of a little town called New Fane. They were born in 1914 to Emil and Amelia (Schultz) Gessner. Edna still lives in her own home in Adell, Wisc. Being the second youngest of six children (the rest were boys), Edna and Ella played dolls together and helped with housework. My Mom, Edna, still has the doll she was given as a child—it's in very good shape after all these years. Her doll, which



Edna Reysen (left) and her twin sister, Ella Gessner, recall they had loads of fun playing together as kids nearly a century ago.

has a porcelain china head, has all its original clothes and leather boots. Years ago, if you lived on a farm, you didn't have a lot of time for fooling around, especially since their father died when they were only about 3 years old.

RAYLENE M. JUSTINGER  
PORT WASHINGTON, WISC.  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: We couldn't find statistics for the average life expectancy of twins, much less for fraternal as opposed to identicals, to say nothing of fraternal twins born/living in Wisconsin. Your mom and aunt have certainly achieved a milestone! Our congratulations!*

### MY TWINS SUFFERED FROM BEING SEPARATED IN SCHOOL

My children's experience with separation certainly led me to many of the same conclusions you have expressed in your letters to legislators regarding the forcible separation of twins in school. They regressed socially because all they wanted to do in their free time was be together, instead of reaching out to other friends. This is absolutely contrary to the stories educators tell us about how good separation is supposed to be for twins and socialization. The Tully Study certainly demonstrates that there are no academic advantages to separation, so the schools have no reason to insist on it.

My son in particular had a terrible year academically—he just sat at his desk and did nothing. Then he would burst into tears when we got home, so homework was impossible to deal with also. Talk about a bad climate for learning!

The media reports I have seen have not mentioned that separation might be actively harmful to the twins involved. My husband and I had a long talk last night about how hard it is to go public with your story, when we are completely at the mercy of the current principal. Our school superintendent and our school committee have both declined to review any individual decision of a principal, so he answers to no one at all. Most parents we know of with any similar difficulties are equally afraid to speak out—they too must continue dealing with their school administrators. It's a Catch-22 for us, and that makes the TWINS™ Magazine voice so crucial.

ANONYMOUS MOM

### ANY BOOKS FOR AND ABOUT TRIPLETS?

Hello, dear TWINS™ team. I enjoy your monthly eNewsletter and I saw the cute children's book about twins. I searched the Web for anything like it about



triplets. Maybe you can give me some ideas about where I could find books for and about triplets.

DANIELLE THOMAS-SMITH  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: There are relatively few triplets and higher-order multiples born, and consequently very few children's books are published specifically for these families. Our TWINS™ Bookshelf offers one book specifically for triplet children—it is entitled "Three is the Perfect Number". We also have a book for quad-kids, entitled "One Baby, Two Baby, Three Baby, Four." Go to <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/childrens-ss3.html> for more information. Another suggestion... How about buying three of any of our books for twins and using a really cute computer-generated sticker that says "Triplets" to put over the word "Twins" each time it appears?*

## 2-TIMES-2 ON THE WAY

I'm sure this isn't totally unique, but our family finds it pretty amazing: We have two daughters who are both expecting babies. Our oldest daughter is due in March; her sister in May. Yesterday, they both learned by way of ultrasounds they are both having twins. And both were told they are carrying identical twins! If we didn't have the pictures as proof, we'd find this hard to believe! What makes this even more interesting is that these two daughters married brothers, and there's no history of twins in their family or ours. We are all so excited that we can hardly stand it!

THRILLED & EXCITED MOM AND  
GRANDMA  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: Be sure they both have frequent ultrasounds to monitor for TTTS (see pages 5 and 19)!*

## AN AFFIRMATION OF TWIN INDIVIDUALITY

Thank you for publishing my story about my sons and giftedness in the Nov./Dec. issue of TWINS™ (Parenting challenges: When one twin is gifted, p. 16). I wanted to let you know about our

continuing journey. Last year, in 2nd grade, Wesley's evaluation affirmed that he was gifted. This fall, we had William evaluated, mostly because of concerns we had about his oppositional behavior. We were surprised to discover that his full-scale IQ equaled his brother's. William demonstrated a preference for nonverbal problem-solving, while Wesley showed a preference for verbal problem-solving, which helps with school performance. Still, I was forced to examine my own expectations and how these may have influenced each boy's performance. It seems likely that I expected less of William, believing him to be less gifted intellectually, and (in doing so, I) may have unintentionally favored Wesley.

We decided to make a concerted effort to change our expectations and treat them more fairly. We separated the boys into different rooms and encouraged them to pursue different sports (football for Wesley, gymnastics for Will). We signed William up for activities that would capitalize on his strengths, such as a Lego-robotics club. This fall, for the first time ever, William's report card surpassed Wesley's.

Will's oppositional behavior has decreased, too. As you might expect, we've seen more behavior problems from Wesley as the power balance has shifted. Overall, though, I think we are functioning in a much healthier manner. I continue to believe parents should focus on identical twins' individual strengths and differences rather than their similarities. The world does that enough. Unfortunately, I think we can be just as apt to compare, judge, and label as strangers do, if not more so. My experience suggests this can have serious deleterious effects.

In my darker moments, I think about the novel "Sophie's Choice" and wonder what I would do. I have no idea. Still, my twins engage in a type of visceral competitiveness that has made me feel at times I had to choose one over the other. But the truth is, I have

enough love for both boys, and the world offers more than enough opportunities for both to succeed. I hope giving them space to grow as individuals, coupled with my unbridled faith in the unique beauty of each boy, will help them find their paths.

I felt I had to share the follow-up to our story with you. Parenting twins is such an interesting journey!

AMY STUART TAYLOR  
LAFAYETTE, IND.  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: Amy is a PhD in School Psychology, who serves as a parenting advocate. She has worked in schools in Colorado, Florida, Maryland and Indiana. See her article about teaching twin-toddlers to read on page 24 in this issue.*

## YIKES, I FOUND A TYPO!

I look forward to receiving every TWINS™ Magazine. In fact, it is one of the only magazines I truly read cover to cover. Thank you for the sanity you give me when I feel like things are getting too crazy with my 2-year-old twin boys and my 1-year-old singleton boy. I've now found myself looking forward to something else with the magazine. When I get it, I quickly begin looking for any errors in the text. The numerous errors I find in every issue make an otherwise wonderful magazine appear amateurish. I'm a teacher, so granted I'm probably a little more picky with grammar, spelling, conventions, and publishing than many readers. Is there someone (anyone) who can do another round of proofing before the magazine goes to print? Grammatically yours,

Kelley Budd  
Joliet, Ill.  
Via email

*Editor's note: We've been short-staffed and deadline-pressured, but we promise to shape up and do a better job of proofreading each issue! Thanks for the nudge. In the meantime, we're delighted to have provided you with a proper puzzle to hold your interest and preserve your sanity.*

# New study to document effects of school separation on twins

By Susan J. Alt

## Jamison J. Grime last month received approval of his plan for a research study that documents

the negative effects of placing twins in separate classrooms for early years of elementary school when they are unprepared emotionally to be apart from each other.

Grime will study three families in-depth for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Toledo (Ohio). He will select three families in early 2008, and carry out extensive interviews with the parents and children before late February. His results are expected to be available in June, 2008, he told TWINS™ in an exclusive interview.

Grime's findings will add significantly to the body of information on the effects of mandatory separation on twins entering kindergarten and 1st grade. All the more important is Grime's professional credibility; he is an elementary school principal in Delta, Ohio, near Toledo. Grime is also the father of 3-year-old twins, who wants his twins to share a classroom when they begin school.

**A collection of quantitative** data, coupled with anecdotal evidence, already documents the emotional damage done to children separated when entering school, if too immature to be apart from their co-twin. Most twins are constantly together from conception until about age 8 or so. But many variables exist in each family's situation, making statistics alone too flimsy to convince educators, principals and district officials to decide each case individually, on its merits.

Consequently, many twins and higher multiples still are forced to separate starting in kindergarten and 1st grade before they're emotionally mature enough to comfortably be apart from

their co-twin for long periods.

"Past studies—and many families' stories in TWINS™ along with articles about this subject—are very valuable. When viewed as a whole, they provide documentation that lacks the credibility educators need to see," Grime said. "I am keeping my study small—limited to only three families whose children have suffered and experienced adverse consequences because of early separation—because I want it to be, as they say, an inch wide and a mile deep, instead of a mile-wide-and-and-inch-deep."

**Grime is seeking families** to be part of his study (see related story on this page). His concept for this research grew out of his own experience with the education establishment in recent years. Grime's neighbor has twin daughters who were being separated in kindergarten. Grime spoke with the principal of the local school on their behalf, since he is principal of a school in an adjoining town. "The kindergarten teacher, a 35-year veteran and a very stubborn lady, would not bend and allow the girls to be together in her classroom. I had begun my doctoral program and thought this would make a great research study," Grime told TWINS™.

Grime's preliminary research into this topic revealed a fair amount of important statistical data, but statistics by themselves seemed to tell only part of the story, Grime concluded. "School administrators are creatures of habit. They believe they know more about education than the general public, and they don't want to be questioned in their judgment or challenged on their policies."

This is why Grime is doing a so-called qualitative study, which may contain some statistics but will largely

focus on the in-depth case studies about "twins who were unsuccessfully separated." Grime will use a lengthy survey and in-person interviews to learn from the three sets of twins and from their parents "the specifics about the effects that separation had on their education."

Grime intends to distill his lengthy dissertation down into "a five-page article that will contain such compelling detail...that school administrators can't ignore it." ♥

## If your "separated twins" suffered in school, contact Jamison Grime

Were your twins placed in separate classrooms when they began school because of a teacher's, school's or district policy that required separation of twins? Did this occur either in kindergarten or 1st grade when your twins weren't ready to be apart? Did they suffer adverse emotional consequences as a result of being forcibly separated into different classrooms in early elementary school?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, Jamison J. Grime needs to hear from you. He wants as many as families as possible (U.S. residents only) whose twins experienced any type of emotional trauma related to school classroom placement in his "universe." Some aspects of trauma would include learning setbacks, aversion-to-school, acting-out, clinginess to a co-twin, withdrawal, regression, language anomalies, or bedwetting. There may be other behaviors as well that parents thought were related to school separation.

Families must have twins currently attending a public school, grades 3 through 7. Grimes will select three families with twins for in-depth research, travelling to each family to complete interviews during February.

Submissions must be received by Jan. 15, 2008. Provide name, address, phone number, daytime email/contact info, names/ages of twins and other children in family. Provide a brief description (300 words max) of your twins' school separation experiences. Contact Grime at [pdj\\_hs\\_jg@nwoca.org](mailto:pdj_hs_jg@nwoca.org)

# TTTS survivors' risks are 5%-8% after laser surgery

Lonnie Somers, founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Fetal Hope, Littleton, Colo., told TWINS™ Magazine, "There isn't at this time a repository of data or a study being conducted on the condition of TTTS survivors following laser surgery." He was responding, specifically, to an inquiry by a TWINS™ reader who wrote in asking for statistics about twin children who survive TTTS in utero (Nov./Dec., 2007, p. 6). Laser fetal surgery is increasingly being used to save lives of fetuses with joined blood vessels, causing fluids and nutrients to drain from one developing baby to the other.

"Some treatment centers are following up on this," Somers said. "They have not yet published any data. I am going to address this with our medical board, which includes top researchers and fetal surgeons—many of whom deal directly with TTTS and related issues—to see if they have data or plans for research on surviving twins."

Somers subsequently reported that "some of the 14 leading fetal centers with which we are working are keeping statistics. Several members of our medical board reported there is data regarding follow-up after laser surgery (average, three years)." One medical expert, he said, commented that tracking the condition of TTTS survivors is vastly complicated because "outcomes vary depending on the quality of the initial surgery. However, in Europe TTTS survivors showed about an 8% risk of experiencing some sort of severe neurologic injury after laser surgery. In the U.S., the risk is quoted at 5%."

Another medical expert told Somers, "Many medical conditions/complications in survivors of TTTS are also very much related to prematurity. Prematurity-related risks include CP, blindness, other neurologic problems, lung problems, gut problems, etc."

The Foundation for Fetal Hope, Somers said, is actively pursuing this line of investigation. He acknowledged that research of this magnitude is very expensive because of the difficulty of obtaining detailed neurologic and physical evaluations that are considered scientifically valid in a patient population scattered across the U.S. ♥



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## Nicotine passed along to babies in mom's breastmilk disrupts infants' sleep patterns, affects infant brains

Babies whose mothers breastfeed and smoke cigarettes sleep less and have disrupted sleep patterns as infants, according to a study conducted by the Monell Chemical Senses Center, Philadelphia, and published in the September 2007 issue of the journal *Pediatrics*. Nicotine in the breastmilk of lactating mothers who smoke acts as a stimulant that affects an infant's developing brain and has been shown to cause long-term behavioral and learning deficits. "Infants spent less time sleeping overall and woke up from naps sooner when their mothers smoked prior to breastfeeding," said lead author Julie A. Mennella, PhD, a psychobiologist. Many women quit smoking or cut back while pregnant, but then resume smoking cigarettes after they give birth. Researchers studied infants who were 2 months to 7 months of age. Sleep time decreased by 37% in babies who ingested nicotine and its components in breastmilk during the study. Breastmilk levels of nicotine in smoking mothers peak 30-60 minutes after smoking one or two cigarettes. ♥



# dealing with diaper rash By Steve Sainsbury, MD

**It is a rare parent of twins who can avoid contending with diaper rashes.** The angry, raw rash, which typically peaks when babies are eight to 10 months of age, can appear almost overnight and stubbornly resist every treatment.

Adding insult to injury, diaper dermatitis can become secondarily

and irritation.

Another common culprit is tight-fitting diapers or clothing that chafes the skin.

Most experts agree that parents should do the following to prevent diaper rashes:

- Change a baby's diapers frequently. The less time urine and stool are in contact with your twin's skin, the less risk of diaper dermatitis.
- Loosen up. Don't over-tighten diapers or use rubber pants. In our zeal to prevent leaks and make neat, tidy packages of baby diapers, we end up trapping urine and stool against our child's skin. This moist, warm environment is ideal for infections and skin breakdown. Tight diapers rub and chafe, which can break down tender skin. Despite your "neatnik" instincts, baggy is good.
- Rinse your twin's bottom with plain water after each diaper change. Don't scrub, don't rub. Gently blot the skin dry. Be sure to dry all the folds also. Avoid using wipes containing alcohol or a fragrance—they can cause added irritation.
- Thoroughly rinse cloth diapers. Laundry soap can be a caustic irritant to your twin's bottom—a double rinse may be necessary to remove all detergent residues from home-laundered diapers. No bleach and fabric softeners.
- Let your baby's bottom breathe. When possible, lay a nice thick towel or blanket on the floor, and let your twins sleep or play naked, wearing no diaper at all. This is

a simple way to dry the skin and keep it away from irritants.

- Consider applying a barrier. Some children are simply more prone to diaper rashes than others. For them, consider using a barrier cream or ointment to protect the skin from irritation. Petroleum jelly, zinc oxide and A&D Ointment have been used for generations, and are still effective. Newer products such as Summers Triple Paste and Desitin may be even better.

Okay. You're doing all this. Religiously. Every day. Despite your best efforts, both twins develop rip-roaring diaper dermatitis. They howl with each diaper change. Wiping the stool from their raw, angry skin brings tears to their eyes and yours. What next?

First, don't blame yourself. It is a rare twin who does not have at least one bout of diaper dermatitis. I still recall my chagrin when all three of my triplets developed diaper rashes simultaneously that took weeks to resolve.

Second, if you've not been letting your child go diaperless, start now. When your baby has to wear a diaper, use a larger size that's looser and less binding. After each diaper change, gently wash all urine and stool from the skin, blot dry, and apply a barrier to keep the skin from further contact.

If, despite these efforts, the rash does not start improving in a week—and particularly if it starts getting worse—see your pediatrician. It may have become secondarily infected with yeast, which requires prescription antibiotic cream. Yeast infections usually start as a red, wet, solid rash in the folds of the skin, with "satellite" red dots projecting around the creases.

infected with yeast or bacteria, making the experience absolutely miserable. But wait...there's hope.

A few basic changes can mean avoiding diaper rashes entirely. And the classic phrase, "smooth as a baby's bottom" will be a reality in our twins' lives.

Irritation from stool and urine is a primary cause of diaper rash. Of the two, feces are far more irritating, particularly true when the stool has prolonged contact with the skin. This is why diaper rash occurs more often during bouts of diarrhea or when long periods elapse between diaper changes.

Other causes can be new foods or antibiotics—in either the child or coming from a nursing mom's milk—that change the stool content, making it softer or more irritating.

Chemicals in laundry detergents, dryer tissues, fabric softeners, and baby wipes can be sources of inflammation



istockphoto.com/everfina

### FAQs regarding “the rash”:

#### ■ Are disposable diapers better than cloth?

There is no compelling evidence in either direction, although most pediatricians feel that disposables keep a baby’s bottom slightly drier than cloth.

#### ■ Which barriers are better—creams or ointments?

Creams dry on the skin, and allow air to get through, while ointments completely cover the skin. The latter (ointments) are probably better once a rash develops, while creams are better as preventive barriers.

#### ■ Is cornstarch a good idea?

Yes, applying cornstarch 2-3 times a day can help keep a baby dry, particularly in the skin folds. Be sure to gently remove the residue with each changing. If it looks like a yeast infection is brewing—stop the cornstarch.

#### ■ How about talcum powder?

No. Talcum powder can be inhaled by the baby and irritate your twin’s lungs. Likewise, avoid creams that contain boric acid, phenol, camphor or benzoin.

#### ■ Can I use a hair dryer to dry the bottom without wiping?

Yes, but carefully. Make very sure the setting is on cool, not hot. Hair dryers can burn twininfants’ delicate skin. ♥

Steven Sainsbury, MD, is dad of eight in a blended family in San Luis Obispo, Calif. His three surviving quads are now 21. He’s an ER physician and has written for TWINS™ since 1986.

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# Germ proof your twins — It's all in their hands!

By Harley A. Rotbart, MD

Twins share everything more than other kids, including germs! Hand washing is the single most effective strategy in reducing the spread of infections. From bathroom to classroom, from kitchen to playground, hand washing protects kids of all ages, and even saves lives.

I know it sounds difficult, if not impossible, to teach kids to wash their hands after being at a playgroup, as sports team event, or a party. But...and this is a really important *but*...the single greatest opportunity for kids to get sick is after they've high-fived the whole soccer (or baseball, or ???) team. Clergy will tell you they always wash after greeting their congregation, because otherwise clergy are sick and unable to greet the congregation.

The real issue is this: Can we cut down the number of colds and flus that kids get each year from an average of 10-12 to just four or five? The answer is yes, with strategic hand washing. Think about the incredible effect of cutting in half the number of kids' infections each year—less parental absenteeism, greater school success for kids, less stress on families, to name a few. Strategic hand washing is not such a high price to pay.

## Sing a song of sixpence—to wash and dry

**The bad news:** Kids typically spend less than five seconds (that's right—5 seconds!) washing their hands, and they usually leave the sink with their hands dripping wet.

**The good news:** A 20- to 30-second wash and thorough drying

reduces the germ load by as much as a thousand-fold.

✎ What's a parent to do? Teach your twins to wash (separately!) until they finish singing "Twinkle-twinkle, little star" or the "ABCs." This makes your job easy—both songs have the same tune and last exactly 20 seconds each.

✎ Pull long-sleeved t-shirt sleeves up to elbows. Use lots of water and do lots of rubbing with soap to create a good lather. Include the wrists, between the fingers, and around the nails, followed by lots of water to rinse.

✎ How well kids dry their hands is important—the drier the hands, the fewer the leftover germs. Use clean towels (paper or cloth) and thorough rubbing; electric dryers aren't as effective in germ reduction. Have your kids sing another verse while drying, or tell them it's "icky" to leave the bathroom with hands that're "sticky." Leave it to a pediatrician to come up with that one!

## What to wash with

✎ Simple soap doesn't kill germs—it cleans hands mechanically, lifting and washing away dirt and organic material that contain germs. But simple soap works just fine! Studies in daycare centers and schools show rates of diarrhea, vomiting illnesses, respiratory infections, and absenteeism are reduced dramatically by simple soap-and-water washes.

✎ Many products are available that do kill germs, including alcohol-containing "hand sanitizers" and antibiotic-containing "antibacterial" soaps. Alcohol kills many germs on contact, and has been incorporated into rubs, rinses, foams, and gels that don't require water, making them ideal for your purse and the glove box in the car. These are safe, but sting if used on cuts or scrapes.

✎ As many as three-fourths of all liquid soaps, as well as countless shampoos, detergents, household cleaners, toothpastes, and other products, are labeled "antibacterial" because they contain an antibiotic (usually triclosan). Antibacterial soaps lower germ counts on kids' hands better than simple soaps—but the benefits in reducing actual infections are unproven. Fortunately, triclosan does not appear to result in germs becoming resistant to antibiotics. (The absence of any real advantage in antibacterial soaps, and the theoretical risks of increasing antibiotic resistance prompted an FDA Advisory Panel to recommend against these products for home use, in favor of simple soap and water.)

✎ Liquid soap from a dispenser is less contaminated with the very germs we're trying to eliminate than bars.





## When to wash

Germs get on kids' hands from contacts with other people, animals, and objects, such as clothing, toys, carpets, books, car seats, supermarket cart handles and strollers. The kids then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth—the germ invades and causes infection.

Good luck teaching your twins to not put their hands into their own or each other's eyes, noses, or mouths. Hence, strategically-timed hand washing is the next best option.

## Can your twins be too clean?

When you look at your twins, your main concern is unlikely to be that they're too clean! Yet, there is some concern about just that possibility because over the past several decades in developed countries, children have developed higher rates of allergies, asthma, and autoimmune diseases. This phenomenon, known as the "hygiene hypothesis," posits that a certain critical mass of germs and dirt is required in order for children to develop healthy immune systems as they mature. In other words, the theory goes, if we try to keep ourselves too clean and prevent too many infections, kids can develop more and more serious conditions related to over-exuberant, immature immune system reactions like allergies and asthma.

The "hygiene hypothesis" is exactly that, a hypothesis, unproven to date. It's a kind of an urban myth. There are no solid scientific data to support this hypothesis. Right now, all we have is anecdotal evidence in the form of observations that more

continued on page 16

## Top 10

### most important hand washing moments

- 1: After playing with a sick friend or sibling (or after handling objects a sick child might have handled, like in the doctor's waiting room)
- 2: After using a public bathroom, use a fresh paper hand towel to turn off the sink and open the bathroom door
- 3: Before eating
- 4: After high-fiving the opposing team at the end of a sports competition (or any other mass-handshaking event like the receiving line at a wedding or graduation)
- 5: After recess
- 6: After attending school or daycare
- 7: After playing with animals or in areas where animals hang out
- 8: After playing outside
- 9: After blowing your nose or coughing into your hands (kids cannot "give themselves an infection" by contact with their own secretions, but it's considerate to protect others from your own germs)
- 10: Before bedtime.

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cases of allergies and autoimmune disorders are occurring in wealthier (“more hygienic”) environments associated with higher socioeconomic classes.

But remember, no scientific data as yet link better hygiene to more allergies, and many other differences between developed and developing countries may better explain the observations.

In a future issue, we’ll take a look at the “hot zones” in your home and your community where your twins are at special risk of picking up bad germs. ♡

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Harley A. Rotbart, MD, is a pediatric infectious disease specialist at The Children’s Hospital of Denver, and vice chairman of pediatrics at the Univ. of Colorado School of Medicine, where he teaches microbiology. He is author of the newly-published book, *Germ Proof Your Kids—The Complete Guide to Protecting (without Overprotecting) Your Family from Infections* (ASM Press, 2008), from which this article is excerpted. Find out more about Dr. Rotbart and his book at [www.germproofyourkids.com](http://www.germproofyourkids.com) and visit his new GERMBlog™, an up-to-the-minute source for important new developments in protecting your kid

## Top 5

### rules to teach your twins about personal hygiene

- 1:** Hand washing is the single most important preventive measure against infections, both giving and getting
- 2:** Always wash after using the toilet, after recess, before eating, after playing outside, after playing with other kids, and before bed
- 3:** Lots of rubbing and big lather are good things
- 4:** The more time spent washing, the better... sing “Twinkle, twinkle” and the ABCs
- 5:** Germs multiply on moist surfaces...drying is as important as washing.

## Teaching kids to wash their hands

- Use plenty of soap and water
- Rub vigorously to make big lather
- Include wrists, spaces between fingers, around nails
- Wash for 20 seconds (singing helps!)
- Dry completely with clean towel (paper or cloth).

## Soaps

### what you need to know

- Simple soap is best—it’s effective, more than adequate
- Alcohol products are safe—useful when soap & water not available
- “Antibacterial” soaps aren’t proven to reduce infections—they’re better at lowering germ counts than simple soap and probably aren’t harmful, either
- Liquid soap dispensers are best—less likely to be “germy” than bar soaps.

## Sharing is great

### except when...

- ...it involves anything that goes into the mouth or on the face.
- ...an object has been used by a sick sibling or friend.
- ...it involves blood. Blood is dangerous. If a friend has a bloody nose, a scraped knee, or a loose tooth, find an adult to help rather than touching the blood yourself. If an adult isn’t nearby, cover the blood with a hanky, a clean cloth or a shirt.
- ...mouths are touching. Hugs are better than kisses. Kisses on the cheek or head are better than kisses on the mouth.

**W**e live in Pinellas County, Florida, and when my twin boys were just 2, we began researching preschools. I was a stay-at-home mom but knew that by the time they were 3 years old and potty trained, I wanted them to attend a good preschool three-and-a-half days a week.

I am a planner. I like to know what is coming, when, and how long it will take to get there. In the process of planning for their preschool, I thought I would also decide whether or not I wanted my kids to attend public or private school beginning in kindergarten.

**My husband and I discussed** private schools when the boys were babies. Florida public schools are not ranked high on the lists of best schools in the country. But we knew I'd have to work full-time to be able to afford private school for our twins. So I began my inquiries, knowing if I had to work full-time in order

the school board some years ago, as being unfair to singletons. Their argument was that the second twin “automatically” took up a space for a singleton in the system. They lobbied successfully and got the policy changed, so there was no sibling preference for twins. I learned I would have to win the lottery twice to get my kids into the same kindergarten!

**The lottery math goes like this** for fundamental school: 40 slots are available for incoming kindergarteners, with 20 of those taken up by the current “sibling preference rule” coupled with preference given to incoming kindergarteners who are children of school employees. (The sibling preference rule states that if a child has a sibling already enrolled in fundamental school—the older sibling must have attended the school at least the previous year—then the incoming sibling is given preference and would automatically be enrolled. This is done to keep families together

# School lottery system defeats twins—How we got the School Board to rethink an unfair rule

By Robin Elam

for them to get a good education, so be it.

I called all my local twins club friends who had older children; I called my neighbors with kids; I talked to everybody about the best schools in Pinellas County. The overwhelming consensus was that the best public schools in the county were either magnet or fundamental schools. I became excited at the prospect I might get to work less and volunteer more if my twins were able to go to a fundamental public school.

**What is a fundamental school?** My research revealed that fundamental schools are smaller schools with more parental involvement, no busing, and a focus on education. There have in place high expectations for academics and behavior, and forge a close bond between family and school, fostering consistent communication between teachers and parents, and they use a back-to-basics approach. Just what I was looking for in a school for my twins!

But I knew I faced another big hurdle: I'd heard there was a lottery system to get into Tarpon Fundamental Elementary.

I researched on the Internet and spoke with other moms of multiples in the fundamental system. According to another mom of twin boys, Pinellas County once had a system of sibling preference for multiple-birth children. In other words, if one twin got in, the other was automatically enrolled as well. This was in an effort to keep families together.

However, parents of singletons challenged this policy with

at the same school.) That left only 20 slots for incoming kindergarteners enrolling for the first time in the lottery, with literally hundreds of applications.

It would be a miracle if any family were to win the lottery twice. How unfair this policy seemed for multiples. Every other family with more than one child got to have them attend school together. How are having two applications to one grade any different than taking up two spots in different grades with the sibling preference rule?, I wondered.

Our only alternative was to apply to the fundamental school, hope that at least one of my sons got in, then split my kids up for a year so we could take advantage of the sibling preference rule the next year.

**This wasn't an alternative** I was willing to accept! This seemed to me to be a clear case of discrimination based on the fact my boys happened to be born on the same day.

So I set out to change school policy. I was president of the Pinellas Parents of Duplicates (PPODs) at the time, a flourishing club growing monthly with a large cluster of moms whose twins were about the same age as mine, and who faced the same dilemma. Even moms who didn't choose to send their multiples to fundamental school supported my efforts, believing it was unfair to allow sibling preference for kids born different years but not for kids who were exactly the same age.

continued on page 18



We sought and received support from another local twins club, St. Petersburg Parents of Twins and Triplets (SPOTTs).

We contacted television stations and performed interviews. We wrote to the city newspaper. Together, we prepared a speech for the monthly school board meeting.

**A mother who separated her twins** for a year to get them into fundamental school said she'd been fighting this battle alone for a long time. (Her twins were entering middle school at the time.) She taught me anyone can speak at a school board meeting for 15 minutes by presenting the topic in advance, or a person could sign up on arrival at a meeting, and could speak for three minutes. I opted for the 15 minutes and called my request in to the school board secretary.

I prepared handouts for the school board. Our club purchased booklets distributed by the NOMOTC (Placement of Multiple Birth Children in School—A Guide for Educators) for each board member. About 20 moms of multiples attended the school board meeting the evening I was to speak. The meeting lasted late into the night; most moms were unable to stay for the full meeting. Nonetheless, our presence was noted by camera crews from the local TV station, which documented our progress.

**My speech was pointed,** educational, and gave real, fair alternatives to the current policy. I talked about how detrimental it is to separate twins into two different schools, and the hardship this causes for families. I stated the importance of putting families first. I stated I wanted my boys in the same classroom, in the same school. I informed board members about twin births rising to 1-in-30 births and how rules about separating multiples were based on old, outdated beliefs. I told them of The Tully Study (UK) that documented detrimental effects of separation, and legislation passed in Minnesota and other states giving parents the authority to choose whether their multiples are placed together in the same classroom.

I proposed examples of how the policy could be altered to eliminate the inequity. One suggestion: Give families of multiples a single lottery number, and if that lottery number is pulled, both children are admitted (I felt this was the fairest policy). Alternatively, I suggested adopting a sibling preference policy for multiples that would apply to all fundamental or magnet schools.

And, I ended by giving them the booklets on educating multiples and related how unfair the current school policy was to families without multiples, as well. To wit, if a new family with several school-age children moved into the county and attempted to enroll both or all of them in a fundamental school, this family also faced a situation similar to that of families with multiples.

The Pinellas County School Board met privately twice more to discuss the sibling preference policy. I followed up with many phone calls so they wouldn't lose sight of the 120 families of multiples in Pinellas County who were awaiting their decision, and watching carefully. The school board eventually changed the policy, but it took more than two years to take effect or be printed in the community's policy-and-procedure books for the next enrollment period... just in time for my twins to apply for fundamental school! (Remember, I said I started this process when they were 2!)

## Changing school policy

My advice to other parents fighting school policy:

- Ask for the policy in writing so you know what you're up against
  - Elicit support from your local twins club(s)
  - Call local newspapers, radio and TV stations and get them interested
  - Present your case in an organized, educational, and pleasant manner with fair, well-considered policy alternatives
  - Follow up with frequent phone calls
  - Start early—policy takes time to write, change, review, and take effect (lawyers are usually involved—if you're working to change a policy so it benefits your child, give the school board at least two years' notice).
- Robin Elam

### The new policy says

multiples have sibling preference, following behind children of employees and children with initial family preferences. In other words, my kids were placed on the waitlist—behind the teachers' kids and behind kids with a sibling already enrolled in our preferred fundamental school. What's more, they were placed on the list behind any kids "initially invited" to attend the school.

It all sounded to me as if the odds were still stacked against them... but it was better than no preference at all.

In fall, 2006, both kids received a lottery number. Zachary's number was drawn and he was invited to attend;

I accepted. Joshua's number was 84 on the waitlist, but he was moved up to No. 1 on the waitlist once I accepted Zachary's invitation. Luckily, they both got in, but for a while I sweated bullets.

**It was touch-and-go for a while** because we have school choice in Pinellas County for children attending regular public school—parents can choose any school in their zone. The county has four zones. If you apply to a fundamental or magnet school, are invited and accept, you consequently forfeit your school choice in your neighborhood school. Once I accepted Zachary's invitation, I forfeited his spot in our local public school. Had Joshua not been moved up to the top of the waitlist and been accepted at the fundamental school, Zachary might actually have had to attend a different school.

The school superintendent was on my speed-dial system, and provided me with frequent updates. I told him over and over I really wanted my kids to attend the fundamental school, but most important to me was having them in the same school.

I'm thankful the school board was open to our suggestions and heard our plight.

**Our mission was actually broader** than just getting the policy changed for parents wanting their twins to attend a Fundamental or magnet school. We wanted to change the policy in a way that would also make it easier to tie multiples together in the regular choice program so all would be assigned to the same school. In the past, siblings within a family sometimes were assigned to different schools within their zone, which made life very difficult for families. We think we've at least partially succeeded in our mission.

I'm so happy with our school choice. I can't say enough wonderful things about Tarpon Fundamental Elementary School. It sure took a lot of planning, self-education, research, work, and luck to get here, though. ♡

A children's clothing supplier writes... "The Sept./Oct., 2007, TWINS™ featured 4-year-old twins Joryann and Alexis from Littleton, Colo., on the cover wearing our brand of clothing, Hartstrings. Our store manager in Castle Rock, Colo., brought it to my attention—how exciting!" Ashley Waszkiewicz, Marketing Manager Hartstrings; Strafford, Penn.

We're pleased to credit Hartstrings with the adorable apparel the girls wore. For more info, go to [www.hartstrings.com](http://www.hartstrings.com)

## Very rare case of TTTS in fraternal di-di twins

Doctors at Duke Univ. Medical Center delivered frightening news in May, 2007, to Johelen and Ben Courliss, Durham, N.C., when Johelen was 24 weeks pregnant and had been told she was having DZ/fraternal, dichorionic/diamniotic twins: The fetuses showed classic symptoms of TTTS. How could this be? TTTS isn't supposed to occur in DZ twins with two amniotic sacs and two placentas (chorions). Women are monitored for TTTS largely when they are expecting MZ/identical twins, most often those who are clearly monochorionic (one placenta). A C-section delivered the the Courliss babies two weeks after TTTS was diagnosed; Abigail was 28% larger at birth than Natalie. The babies are doing very well now, but it could have been disastrous. Doctors at Duke were perplexed by the case; it's possible the Courliss babies are MZ/identicals after all, but that certainly didn't appear to be the case. TWINS™ learned that only a few cases of DZ/fraternal di-di twin TTTS are known to have previously occurred. TTTS affects about 15% of so-called MCDA (monochorionic, diamniotic) twins, says NOMOTC, which supports early detection and more use of ultrasounds. "Too many MCDA pregnancies are routinely missed or TTTS is misdiagnosed because ultrasounds are performed too infrequently," NOMOTC said. Further research may indicate a need for more monitoring of all same-sex fetuses—perhaps weekly during critical stages—for possible development of TTTS. ♡



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# FIRST-FRIENDS, FAST-FRIENDS: How twins develop friendship

By Christina Baglivi Tinglof

As parents of twins or triplets, we anxiously await the day when our multiples play together for the first time. From the moment they arrive home from the hospital and we place them together in the crib, we watch and wait, dreaming of the day they'll become close companions.

We hope they'll happily share toys, patiently take turns, all the while laughing at their great fun. Yet, a child's ability to play develops slowly in stages. Most children actively engage with each other in imaginary play or other games when they're about 3, and multiples are no exception.

"In the beginning, I thought, 'Having twins is boring. They don't even like each other,'" joked Heather Utile of Galt, Calif., and mother to Macie and Emily, 13-month-old DZ/fraternal girls. "I guess I thought my babies would be best friends from the beginning. But babies in general don't interact until after the first year anyway. It's just another stage in their development, and being twins doesn't change that. I don't know why I thought it would be different."

## Twins very aware of each other from birth

Your little twinnies may seem unaware of each other at first, but that doesn't mean they won't be great buddies later. In reality, they actually are very conscious from infancy that their co-twin is nearby, though they neither may show it. Most children under 2 don't have the verbal or social skills to interact with each other to any great extent. Instead they sit side-by-side, each one occupied

with his own toys but taking comfort in knowing their sib is close. One may offer the other a toy or occasionally look

over to see what the other is doing. Or one may follow the other if she crawls or walks to play in another part of the room.

But don't expect ongoing or consistent intermingling in young toddlers. Psychologists call this "parallel play," an important phase of development as children slowly begin to understand their sense of self and others, and where they fit into the world.

As twin-toddlers grow, however, their interest in each other blossoms as well. Now the real fun begins. They move from parallel play to "cooperative play," usually by age 3. First glimpses into this next stage of play are exciting—it's the real beginning of twins' lifelong friendship.

"One day they were sitting back-to-back doing their own things, and all of a sudden they were facing each other playing together. It was amazing and heartwarming," said Kim Monroe of her 4½-year-old twins, Emily and Max. "I took a picture of it just to remind me of that special moment. Most people look at that picture and see two kids playing. To me, I see my kids really bonding for the first time," said the Hamilton Square, N.J., mom.

Although it's entertaining to watch twins gleefully interacting with each other, there's actually more happening during cooperative play than meets the eye. Twins are learning important social skills and the subtle nuances of group play. Through cooperative play they learn the art of negotiation and sharing, discovering that others have thoughts and feelings.

## Twosomes have social advantage over singletons

This leads some twin experts to speculate that multiples have a social advantage over their singleton counterparts. Twins have continuous practice—a built-in playmate at home—and as a result, some become more socially aware and confident than single-born children of the same age.

And what imaginations they have as their "pretend" stories grow more complex and certainly more interesting! You can encourage your multiples to build on their friendship through cooperative play (expanding their use of expressive language in the process) by keeping handy a supply of everyday objects that your children use in their imaginary world—an old telephone, empty cereal boxes, plastic dishes and bowls, dress-up clothing.

Multiples may learn the art of sharing and cooperation a bit earlier than singleton children do, but it doesn't mean that all twins and triplets will be seasoned pros at these relationship-arts. Learning to share toys and treats is hard work! Parents of multiples can help guide their children to be thoughtful playmates by using a variety of tricks and techniques.

"I encourage them to hold hands while on walks,





jumping on the trampoline, or dancing,” said Elissa Martino, who believes it helps her girls learn to appreciate their sisterhood and their twinship. This Seattle, Wash., mom to 19-month-old DZ/ fraternal twins Mia and Eva, also steps in immediately to head off intra-twin toy fighting. “When they aren’t sharing, I usually intervene and give the toy to whoever had it first, and find something else for the other.”

In a similar vein, Laura Woods acts to head off potential toy-tantrums before they start. This Chicago, Ill., mom tries not to duplicate toys and instead explains to her 2-year-old MZ/identical boys, Aeddon and Bennett, that each boy must wait his turn with the toy. “If one of my sons grabs the desired toy from his brother, I always make him give it back,” she said. “When the other person is finished playing with the toy and gives it to his brother, I make a big deal about how patient he was for waiting his turn.”

### Playing catch, offering snacks teach taking turns

A useful tip for teaching twins to share: Organize a simple game of catch. Throw a big, soft ball to one child and shout, “It’s your turn to throw it!” and encourage that child to throw the ball to her co-twin. When the other twin catches the ball, cheer him on as he gives someone else a turn. And so on. Another method: When offering snacks to your children, give the snacks to one twin and suggest that she share with her brother.

“Sharing is a never-ending battle, but luckily with twins, learning about sharing starts very early,” noted Kim Monroe. “When it gets bad, I separate them for the day. Max will eat in

the kitchen, Emily in the dining room. Max will play in the den, Emily in the living room. By the end of the day, they’re apologizing to each other and want to do stuff together again. I think the separation helps them learn to appreciate each other.”

Continuous give and take, sharing and exploring enables twins to become each other’s first friends and best friends. But eventually your children’s social circle will widen, and it should. Parents can help introduce new friends into their twins’ lives.

Most twins and triplets have plenty of practice interacting with their siblings, so new social situations are less scary or intimidating. Yet, some twins will continue to hold back in unfamiliar social situations with new people, preferring to hang out with just his or her co-twin. That’s where parents can step in and help.

Children need to “practice” becoming friends with other children outside the family. So it helps to invite a variety of children over to your house for play dates. (Many local twins clubs host weekly play groups.) Or take your multiples to the park where they can interact with other children their age. They’ll benefit from activities where they have a chance to meet a variety of other children. ♡


Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 11-year-old fraternal twin boys and a 9-year-old singleton. She’s also the author of *Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples* and *Double Duty: The Parents’ Guide to Raising Twins* (McGraw-Hill-\$16.95), available from the TWINS Parenting Bookshelf at [www.TwinsMagazine.com/parenting.html](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com/parenting.html). Christina’s website is [www.talk-about-twins.com](http://www.talk-about-twins.com).



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# being dollar-wise about the future when you have twins

By Cynthia E. Zalewsky, CFP®, CSC®

## Dear Cindy,

**I made the decision to return to work full-time when my twin daughters were 3½. Even though my husband and I both make decent money, I've noticed it is really difficult to save anything when you have twins. In 13 years, my twins will be going to college. What should I be doing now to prepare for having two in college at the same time?**

*A concerned mom*

## Dear Concerned,

Having one child in college at a time is daunting, and the prospect of paying tuition and expenses of two or more for college is downright scary! With education costs soaring, what's a parent to do?

First and foremost—never, ever compromise funding your retirement to fund college expenses. Your twins can get loans for school; you, however, cannot get a loan for retirement. That said, let's talk strategy.

If you haven't already, open a 529-plan for each child. And for those parents whose twins are still infants, act now! Don't

wait until they're 3 or 5 or 10 years old...earlier is better. With more than 80 plans for you to choose among, you'll have more than enough to select one that works for you. Many states offer a tax deduction to residents for their contributions to an in-state 529 plan. So be sure to consider an in-state plan if you can take advantage of those

deductions. When you're funding plans for two or more, the benefits can really add up.

Keep in mind that the quality of the plan and the expenses associated with it will also be determining factors in whether you choose to invest in-state or out, not just the tax deduction. Some states even offer matching grants to those who qualify. Hello free money!

Are you worried that your children may not go to college? No problem. You can always change the designated beneficiary(s) of the 529 plan later on, or if necessary pay a 10% penalty on funds used for non-qualified expenses. In other words, if Sue and Johnny don't go to college but do need money to buy their first homes, you can pay the penalty and any applicable taxes on the gains and all is not lost.

Many states offer two different types of section 529 savings plans—a direct plan, and an advisor plan. The direct 529-plan carries the lowest expenses but also eliminates potentially needed advice. An advisor plan allows by an advisor who can provide advice, but who earns a commission. This type of plan carries upfront loads (as high as 5.75%) in addition to higher underlying expenses each year.

If you need college planning advice or help in choosing a plan, you are better off hiring a fee-only financial advisor, preferably a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®), and then paying an hourly fee or a project-fee for advice you need. By doing this, you can sign up with whatever direct plan you select in your state, and save. You can

find a fee-only financial professional at [www.napfa.org](http://www.napfa.org) or [www.fpanet.org](http://www.fpanet.org).

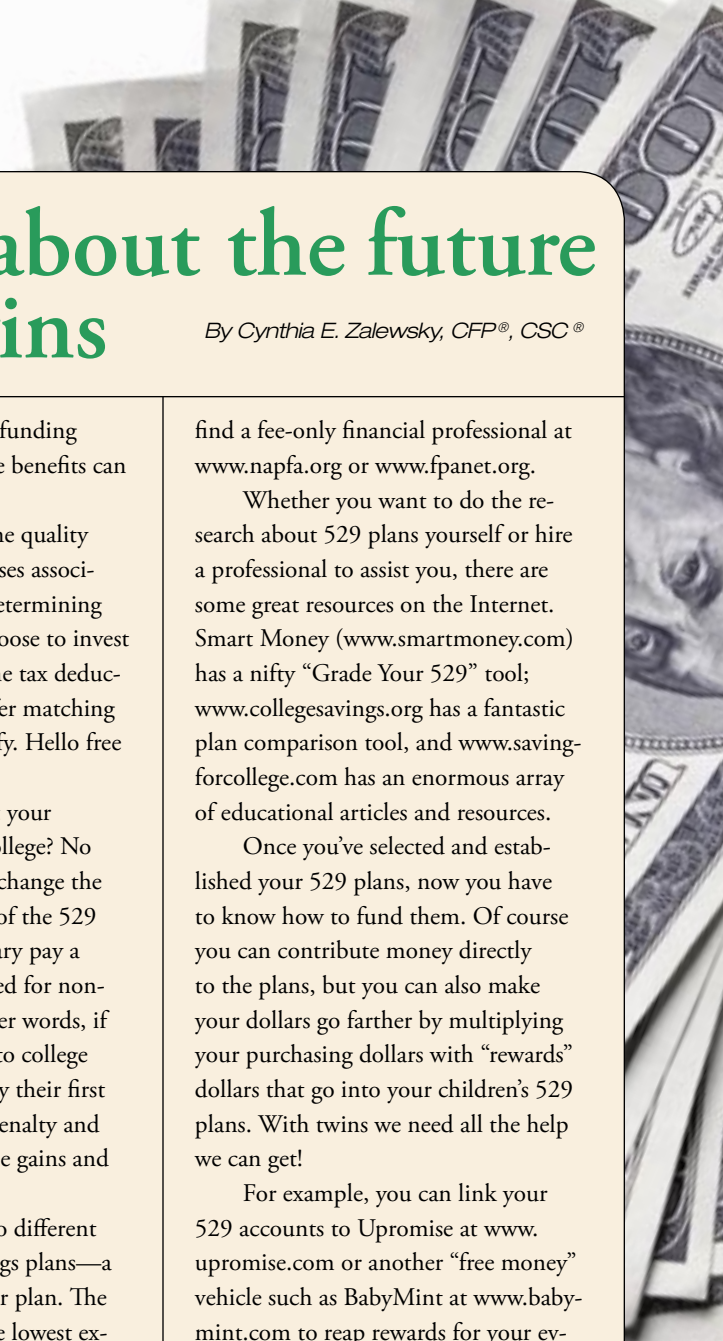
Whether you want to do the research about 529 plans yourself or hire a professional to assist you, there are some great resources on the Internet. Smart Money ([www.smartmoney.com](http://www.smartmoney.com)) has a nifty "Grade Your 529" tool; [www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org) has a fantastic plan comparison tool, and [www.saving-forcollege.com](http://www.saving-forcollege.com) has an enormous array of educational articles and resources.

Once you've selected and established your 529 plans, now you have to know how to fund them. Of course you can contribute money directly to the plans, but you can also make your dollars go farther by multiplying your purchasing dollars with "rewards" dollars that go into your children's 529 plans. With twins we need all the help we can get!

For example, you can link your 529 accounts to Upromise at [www.upromise.com](http://www.upromise.com) or another "free money" vehicle such as BabyMint at [www.babymint.com](http://www.babymint.com) to reap rewards for your everyday shopping and dining. Upromise has a handy downloadable shopping toolbar, so when you're up at 2 a.m. handling double feedings you won't fall victim to "brain fog" by forgetting to follow their links to reap rewards.

Send invitations in the form of Upromise and BabyMint links to Grandma & Grandpa as well, to ratchet up your 529 savings. Cash gifts your children receive at holidays or for special milestone events in their lives can be socked away in each child's 529.

If your children are older than 5, take time to instill good money habits—teach them to reserve part of every



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gift they receive for a purchase of their choice, then invest the remainder.

You have a great opportunity here to institute a matching program that fits within your budget. Your children will learn to appreciate incentives if you match the amounts they choose to save with a contribution of your own. It doesn't have to be dollar-for-dollar—regardless of what you match, you'll model smart money behavior! Remember, one of the longest-lasting gifts you can give your twins is one that starts at home and is completely free—financial education.

Finally, just start saving. No amount of money is too little! Pennies add up. Just teaching your children to put all of their pocket-change into a jar, and then depositing it once a month into their education account is the place to start. They'll quickly learn

that \$50 a year is better than no dollars a year. Investment minimums for 529 plans can be anywhere between zero and \$25, allowing everyone to be able to afford investments in 529 plans.

As with any investment plan, it's wise to invest systematically or it just may not happen. If you're disciplined, putting \$10 or \$20 aside each week for each twin in an individual 529 plan (that's \$45-\$100 a month for each child, and about \$520 a year per child) may be easy.

But if you tend to be less than disciplined about savings and investments, have your employer debit your paycheck for a per-paycheck amount that goes directly into your 529 plans.

In lieu of having your employer make payroll deductions, your 529 plans may be able to debit your bank account directly each month for the

amounts you choose to put into the accounts.

The cumulative effect of your regular contributions—and those of your twin accompanied by your “matching grant”—coupled with interest and investment earnings will make these accounts work for you as the years go by—you'll be surprised to see \$40,000 or more in each twin's 529 account after 18 years of regular saving. ♡

Cynthia Zalewsky is the founder and president of Saratoga Investment Solutions Inc., Saratoga Springs, N.Y., a fee-only life planning and wealth management advisory company. She has 2½-year-old twin sons, and is an officer of the local twins club. Got a finance question for Cindy? Send it to [twins.editor@businessword.com](mailto:twins.editor@businessword.com)

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# “I taught my toddler twins to read... and you can, too!”

by Amy Stuart Taylor

My identical twin sons were born at 33 weeks' gestation and spent 15 days in the NICU. After coming home, Wesley blossomed but William faced significant health and developmental issues. I knew enough about learning difficulties to know he was at-risk.

So I decided to do everything I could to enrich my children's early years. Most of all, I wanted to teach them to read before they started kindergarten.

I've always loved reading books while snuggled between my sons. Reading together has been a terrific teaching tool.

I taught both boys the alphabet using books like “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” and “I Spy Little Letters.” I knew letter sounds mattered, so I tried to fold them into our practice.

But at one point I got stuck.

How did letters and sounds become words? And how did

words evolve into sentences, paragraphs, and storybooks? I wanted to propel my boys further down the road to reading, but wasn't sure how to do it.

Luckily, my work in the schools included timely training in literacy instruction that switched on the light bulb for me. Suddenly, I understood what I could do! I just had to get them going on the phonemics and phonics...they are the keys! By the time William and Wesley began kindergarten, both were reading.

All parents can set the stage for their children to become readers. It's well worth the time to learn a few facts about literacy development with a crash course in reading fundamentals.

## The Big Five

Reports released by the National Reading Panel in April, 2000, formed the foundation for modern literacy theory ([www.nationalreadingpanel.org/](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/)). Researchers at the University of Oregon have further condensed current thinking into the “Big Ideas in Beginning Reading.” An informative, parent-friendly web site is <http://reading.uoregon.edu/>.

Here's a summary of the five areas that matter in emerging literacy, and how you can teach them to your twins while they're still very small:

### 1. Phonemic Awareness

**What is it?** The ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words (auditory tasks).

**How can you teach it?** Say “The first sound in ‘cat’ is /c-c-c/. The middle sound in ‘cat’ is /a-a-a/. The ending sound in ‘cat’ is /t-t-t/.” Demonstrate blending the sounds together by saying “Cccaaattt.” Then, show how to segment a word into its sounds by saying “What sounds do we hear in the word ‘cat’? /ccc/-/aaa/-/ttt/”

### 2. Phonics (or “the alphabetic principle”)

**What is it?** The ability to associate letters and sounds and then combine them (auditory and visual tasks).

**How can you teach it?** Show your children a picture of the letter “a”. Say “This is the letter ‘a’. It makes the sound /a-a-a/.” Repeat this process with each letter, as often as possible. Then, ask your children: “What letter is this?” and “What sound does an ‘a’ make?”

When children master most letters, move on to short words. Say each sound in isolation as you point to the letters, “/ccc/- /aaa/- /ttt/”. Next, show how they blend together by sliding your finger underneath the word and saying “cccaattt”. Look for short, phonics-based books to read together. Or, make your own mini-books with your children, using words they know.

### 3. Vocabulary (word recognition)

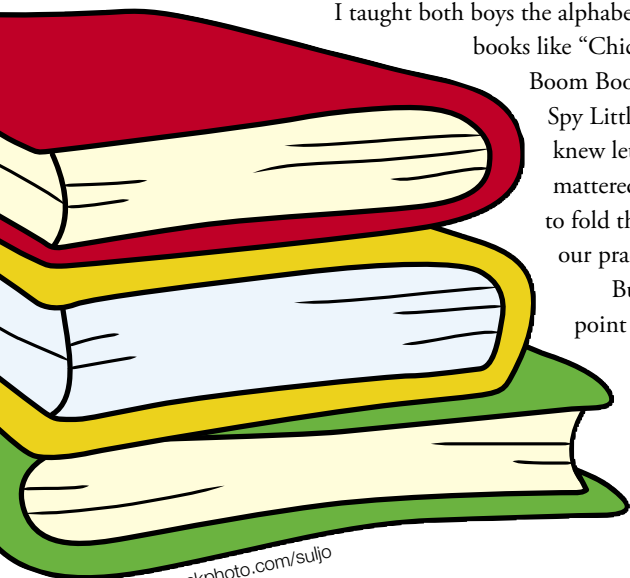
**What is it?** Memorized words children can identify on sight.

**How can you teach it?** Again, start with letters, in a book or on flashcards. Remember to practice each letter name and sound together as often as possible. When your child knows most letters on sight, begin to mix in short words. Find a list of pre-primer or kindergarten “sight words” (the Dolch list is a common one). Ask your children which words they know. Then, make flashcards and mix one or two unknown words with several known words from the list. Keep the ratio of known words to unknowns high so children will feel successful.

### 4. Comprehension

**What is it?** Understanding what a story is about.

**How can you teach it?** Discuss story elements such as title, author, illustrator, plot, characters, and setting. Ask children questions before, during, and after reading. Begin with concrete questions about the story (“Who is Pickles's friend?”), and then build



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## Resources

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up to inferential questions (“Why do you think Pickles changed his behavior?”). Have your children retell the stories after you’ve read the stories together.

### 5. Fluency


**What is it?** Rate of oral reading.


**How can you teach it?** Read along with your child or listen to your child read aloud and provide feedback. Working on fluency doesn’t make much sense until a child has mastered other reading fundamentals; however, it’s good to encourage reading out loud early on.

#### But I’m not a teacher!

My friends wanted to help their children learn to read, too, but many lacked confidence in their ability to teach because they didn’t work in education. Believe me—you don’t need a teaching degree to bolster your children’s emerging literacy. Just determine what your twins already know and what they may be ready to learn. Try out some of the suggested techniques and see how your children respond. Stay positive, and you can’t go wrong.

Here are a few more hints about the learning process:

 **Effective teachers “scaffold” children’s growth.** Scaffolding means to build knowledge by providing your kids with supports to help advance their learning. If I ask my sons some questions and get blank stares in response, I know I’ve made too big a leap from their existing knowledge to new information. So I backtrack and fill in the gaps by linking my question to words and concepts they do understand. No one knows your children like you do. Your instincts make you the perfect “builder” of your children’s knowledge base.

 **Children will learn when the conditions are right.** That means matching what they already know and can do with what you teach. I don’t believe lazy children exist. But an emerging reader will grow frustrated and lose interest if asked to read a “Goosebumps” book out loud. That’s why it’s important to assess what they already know (just ask). Then,

make sure you’re working within that comfortable range.



**Respect memory limits.** Memory is critical to learning.

It varies individually, but generally grows as children do. Chunking is the technique of presenting new information in appropriately-sized pieces to optimize learning. Small bits of information (1-2 pieces) at a time are best for preschool-aged kids. Observe to see how much information each child can absorb and retain per lesson. Some kids need more rehearsal and practice than others.



**Keep it fun!** Learning has a strong emotional component.

Success is a great motivator, while failure and shame are powerful deterrents. Working on literacy at home should never feel punitive. I built positive rewards into our home reading program and met each baby step with praise. If tears of frustration brimmed, we quit for the day.



**Throughout this process, teach your children how to listen.**

I believe auditory awareness is the hidden key to literacy and school success, in general. Most classroom learning is still auditory (presented by teachers orally). Children who have learned to listen well, and who understand what they hear, do much better in school than those who can’t. Build the listening habit by reading to your children daily and playing audio stories at home and in your car. Children’s stories and songs on CDs in the car are so much better for kids than videos.

#### What else can I do to help my twins to read?

Check out the assessments schools are using. Many schools use DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) to assess kids starting in kindergarten, to determine which kids need additional intervention (<http://dibels.uoregon.edu>). Research shows skills measured on these tests correlate with literacy. “Get it, Got it, Go!” is a similar program for preschool (<http://ggg.umn.edu/>). Both sites let you download materials for free.

Choose books wisely. Children can’t read books on their own

## Read for Success

- When teaching the alphabet, always pair the name of the letter with its sound, so your twins learn that letters are visual symbols and sound symbols.
- Familiarize yourself with pre-primer and kindergarten sight-word lists, such as the Dolch list. Make flash cards using these lists.
- Play rhyming games with your twins to work on phonemic awareness.
- Stock a “book box” with books your twins can read independently or with your support. Rotate new books into the box as skills grow.
- Establish the habit of daily reading practice early; most teachers will expect it.
- Choose audio books for car travel and home listening. Most public libraries offer great selections.
- Seek computer games that work on phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and comprehension. But don’t overdo screen time; “live” reading practice is best.
- Expose your twins to a variety of concepts (art, history, geography, science, mathematics, music) through books, museums, and community events. Children who begin school with a wide breadth of knowledge are primed to learn.

until they know almost all the words on sight. Imagine if someone handed you a book written mostly in Greek and asked you to read aloud. You’d feel set-up and humiliated. Ditto, for emerging readers.

Book covers contain age ranges that are only approximate; these indicators vary widely among publishers. Your twins’ reading “levels” are words they know by sight matched against words in a given book.

Begin with simple phonics-based books that repeat rhyming words. Kids love these, and they’re great teaching tools. Dr. Seuss books are good choices for children with larger sight word vocabularies (*Green Eggs and Ham*, *Great Day for Up!*, *Hop on Pop*). Read along with your children and prompt them to sound out unfamiliar words. Of course, continue to read a variety of books aloud to your children.

What about the theory that kids will read on their own when they’re ready? In most cases, that’s just not true. Research shows children who aren’t reading by 3rd grade are unlikely to catch up. Proactive parents give children the boost that can make a critical difference in school, and life.

My boys are now in 2nd grade, and are strong students. Starting school able to read—and able to listen carefully and understand what they hear—paved their way for a smooth academic ride. Begin to pour your twins’ literacy foundation early. Your children, and their future teachers, will thank you. ♥

---

Amy Stuart Taylor, PhD, is a writer and parenting advocate with a doctorate in School Psychology. She has worked in schools in Colorado, Florida, Maryland and Indiana. She lives in West Lafayette, Ind., with husband, James, and MZ/identical twins, Wesley and William.

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## Are more conjoined twins being born?

There are certainly more twins being born, and by definition, more twins means more conjoined twins. Statistics show that approximately 1 set in every 200 deliveries of monozygotic/identical twins is conjoined. Another statistic is that about 1 in every 85,000 births is a conjoined identical twin. MZ/identicals account for only one-third of all twin-sets. So births of conjoined twins are still relatively rare.

But many more conjoined twins are in the news in recent years, largely because survival rates have improved significantly and because innovative surgical techniques to facilitate separations of conjoined twins have been developed.

Only 35% of all conjoined twins survive one day. And until quite recently, survival rates were lower than that. Improved medical imaging and fetal monitoring, better surgical techniques, and vastly better neonatal care has meant longer lives for more conjoined twins.

Surgical advances in pediatric procedures, urology, gastro-intestinal, orthopedics, and

neurosurgery have enabled more successful separations of conjoined twins. Because these surgeries are so complex and two lives are involved in each effort, news media around the world are fascinated by the stories. An estimated 200+ attempted surgical separations have taken place around the world since the 1970s, says Nancy Segal, PhD, author of *Entwined Lives* (go to [www.twinsmagazine.com/entwined\\_lives.html](http://www.twinsmagazine.com/entwined_lives.html)). Approximately three-fourths of all attempted surgical separations have resulted in one or both twins surviving the operation, Segal estimates.

A pair of adult Iranian twins both died following an attempted separation in July 2007. Young South Korean twins joined at the spine were successfully separated in August 2007; both survived. In October 2007, 4-month-old Greek twins joined at the sides of their heads were successfully separated in Italy. In October 2003 Egyptian twins, 2, who were joined at the crowns of their heads, were successfully separated in Dallas, Tex.



# Magic checklist for planning trips

Jennifer Lute has identical twin daughters 20-months-old. She and her family live in Portsmouth, Ohio, and they make the four-hour trek to Toledo to visit Jennifer's family about six times a year. Jennifer told TWINS™ her daughters "are not the best at traveling," but she has trip-planning down to a science.

Jennifer read the article by Mark Kennedy in our Nov./Dec., 2007, issue ("Could this get any worse?" by Mark Kennedy, p. 11) and decided she just had to respond. "It seems Mr. Kennedy made every possible mistake, when traveling with kids, that I could ever

imagine. Their stomach flu couldn't be helped, but every other mistake is easily avoided with some simple planning," she said in her email to TWINS™.

"After reading the article, I wanted to pass along my checklist that I keep in my computer on an Excel spreadsheet. I print out the list and check off each item as I pack for every trip I take with my girls. This has made road trips so much easier. I no longer wonder what I have forgotten, and know I'm prepared for whatever the road may bring." ♥

## Jennifer's Fail-Safe Twin-Trip Checklist

### To Do—1 day before trip:

- Fill car with gas
- Clean out car
- Put address into Navigation System (and print directions)
- Pack emergency diaper-blow-out and throw-up kit; put in car (Ziplocs, wet wipes, small towel)
- Pack everything in car not needed prior to leaving
- Cell phone + charger in car
- Load favorite DVD into DVD player

### Packing list:

- Pack-n-Plays
- Pacifiers
- Monitor
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Sound machine
- Travel highchairs
- Sippy cups
- Baby food
- Fruit puffs/Cheerios
- Spoons
- Bibs for feeding
- Blankets and sheets

- PJ's
- Mittens/hats (or bathing suits if it's summer)
- Socks
- Outfits
- Towels
- Shoes
- Jackets
- Bug spray
- Sunblock
- Tylenol®
- Allergy medicine
- Anti-gas drops
- Washcloths
- Baby wash
- Lotion
- Camera/video camera
- Small gates
- Large gate
- Toys
- Books
- DVDs
- Hair pretties/comb
- Snacks and sippy cups in car within reach of driver
- **Double-check list**

## Pleasure Reading

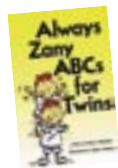
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# teaching your twins to wait their turn

By Michelle LaRowe Conover

**Social skills don't come naturally to twins, or to any children, for that matter.** As the song in "South Pacific" says, "You have to be taught..." It's hard for kids to learn to be graceful—or gracious—in situations when many people are present because kids are naturally exuberant, excited and want to race ahead. Little bulldozers!

Whether it's a matter of waiting for your attention while you're talking on the phone, waiting their turn at bat in a game of baseball, or waiting to arrive at a most-anticipated location, mastering the art of "waiting" is a challenging social skill for multiples to acquire and hone.

Think back to how proud you were when your talking twin toddlers said their first "Please!" in stereo.

"Mom, can we please have a piece of candy? Please?"

You grinned from ear to ear, delighted that they used the manners you were trying to teach. But—you probably responded with, "No, honey. It's almost time for dinner."

"But mom! We said 'please'."

"Sam and Max, I said no."

Your twins then screech, in harmony, "But mom!!!! We said 'please'!!! Puh-lease!"

How quickly your delight turned to anguish when you realized you've created a monster—suddenly, your kids believe "Please" is a magic word entitling the speaker to every desire of his itty-bitty heart the very second he utters the word.

Fast-forward a few years. Your twins are growing up—and your expectations are growing along with them. You now expect your twins to understand that 'Please' isn't a magic

key that always admits them instantly to the world of getting what they want. You now expect your twins to understand that waiting their turn is part of life we all must endure.

The first step in teaching your twins to wait patiently is to role-model waiting patiently yourself. If you're inclined to butt-in a lot on others, watch out—they'll learn quickly from you.

Here are some other things you can do to help your multiples master the social skill of waiting their turn.

## When you're on the phone

**SCENARIO:** Your twins have been taught to use the phrase "Excuse me" when they want to get your attention while you are doing something else.

"Mom! Mom!"

"One minute, Emma. I'm on the phone."

"Mom! Excuse me! Excuse me!"

"One minute, I said."

"Mom! I said 'Excuse me.' Excuse me!!"

"Emma!!!!!!!"

**PROBLEM:** Your twins haven't yet grasped the concept that even when they say, "Excuse me" they sometimes need to wait until you can take a break to address them.

**SOLUTION #1:** Try using the 'Secret Code to Interrupting' method. You teach your twins to put a hand gently on your hip or on your arm—without saying a word. You then wait for a natural break in conversation, and excuse yourself for a moment while you turn to your twins for their needs.

**SOLUTION #2:** Role-model.

Your twins are like sponges, always observing and soaking up what they see and experience. Role-model with

your spouse, your children, your friends and others with whom you interact how to politely interrupt by saying "Excuse me, please" and then waiting to be acknowledged before speaking.

**SOLUTION #3:** "Practice and Prompt" your twins to put their social skills to use. Use phrases like "Honey, when we say 'Excuse me' what do we need to do?" and, "If someone is talking, you need to say 'Excuse me' and then wait until the person addresses you." These phrases will help prompt your twins to properly execute their skills when they are in conversations with each other and with other people.

## When your twins are at play

**SCENARIO:** Your twins really enjoy playing interactively together and with others, but when it comes to playing games that require waiting their turn, things don't go so smoothly.

"Hurry up! I want my turn!"

"You're at bat sixth, after Timmy."

Player #2 comes up.

"Is it my turn yet?"

"Just a few more batters."

"Can I bat now, Coach?"

"Is Timmy up? You are up AFTER Timmy!!"

**PROBLEM:** Your twins don't yet grasp the concept of group- or team-play.

**SOLUTION #1:** Foster good sportsmanship. Teach your twins that when they are waiting, they are still part of the game. If they are playing a sport, encourage them to cheer on their team. If they are playing a board game, remind them that others won't want to play if they aren't having fun—and rushing people through their turn certainly isn't fun.

**SOLUTION #2:** Teach your twins the

importance of teamwork. Whether at work or at play, your twins will encounter many chances to be part of a team. Teach them there is no "I" in teamwork—everyone gives his best for the team to succeed.

**SOLUTION #3:** Practice, practice, practice. Have a pizza night each week when everyone takes part in making pizza. Give each family member a role to play—one twin is in charge of the sauce, the other's in charge of cheese. All the ingredients make the pizza—if everyone cooperates and waits her turn to add an ingredient, you'll have a great (and edible) masterpiece!

**In the car**

**SCENARIO:** You're heading to a family outing on the lake. Your twins are driving you crazy with their never-ending questions shouted in stereo

from the back seat.

"Are we there yet?" Two voices, in unison, asking for the tenth time.

"Another half-hour and we'll be there."

Three minutes elapse.

"Are we almost there now?"

"No, not yet."

"How much longer?"

Aaaarrrrrghhhhh!!

**PROBLEM:** Your twins are eager to get where they're going. You've pumped them up for this trip, and they are so excited. They just can't wait.

**SOLUTION #1:** The oldies but goodies—a game of I-Spy, license plate ABC's, or Punch Buggy will win you about 10 miles of peace. There is always the option of playing a DVD.

**SOLUTION #2:** Label a container of Smarties, M&M's, or other bite-size candies with each twin's name. Every

time they misbehave they must hand over a piece of candy. When you arrive at your destination, they may eat what they have left.

**SOLUTION #3:** Have a bag of car-only gizmos and gadgets. Keep a reserve bag of toys and car-games in the trunk. Magnetic travel-size Tic-Tac-Toe or checkers make for great back seat games.

When you try out these tips you'll quickly see that waiting needn't be painful, for you or your twins!

Michelle LaRowe Conover lives on the East Coast and recently learned she is having a baby (not twins, darn it!) later this year. Michelle has assisted four families that have twins. She wrote *Nanny To The Rescue!* and was 2004 Nanny of the Year.



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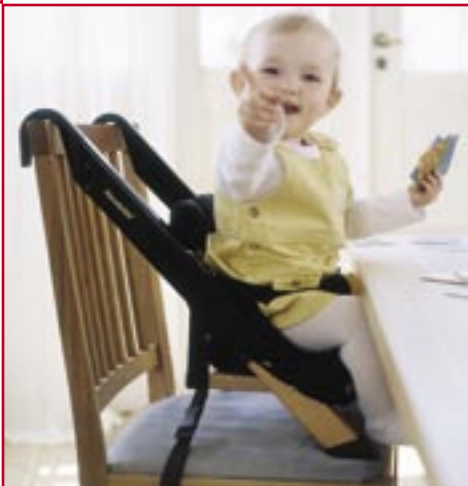
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# preparing for the birth of twins with medical challenges

By Patricia Walters Deskin,  
RNC, MS, IBCLC

**In a perfect world, an ultrasound technician would happily tell us two perfect babies are growing inside a womb meant to carry only one.**

But that isn't always the case. Congenital birth defects occur more often in multiple gestations for unknown reasons. Routine ultrasound screenings in the first and second trimester of pregnancy can help estimate the true gestational age of a fetus and can tell us if we're lucky enough to be carrying more than one baby. Ultrasound can also diagnose fetuses with congenital birth defects.

But not all ultrasounds are equal. According to the largest study of routine ultrasonography in pregnancy, the sensitivity for detecting all birth defects was found to be 56%. In the study, specifically, 73% of all major defects and 45% of minor defects were detected and diagnosed. But it seems the setting in which your ultrasound is performed affects the detection rate of birth defects. Accuracy in detection and diagnosis of birth defects depends on the quality of the equipment available and the skill of the technician performing the test.

**In my own case**, it was as if the news I was expecting more than one baby wasn't enough. My world went into a tailspin when I was told one baby would be born with a severe congenital heart defect. I remember clearly my feelings of helplessness and confusion.

"Oh my...what do I do now? What can I do?" I remember thinking.

Having gone through the hellish process myself, I've put together some suggestions for how other expectant

parents can prepare for the birth of a twin with increased needs.

If you haven't already done so, think about transferring your care to a perinatologist rather than continuing to use your regular obstetrician. This is not to say your obstetrician isn't wonderful, but a perinatologist specializes in complicated pregnancies. Not all doctors are created equal, either!

**If possible, arrange** to receive your care at a tertiary care center. Most large university hospitals fall into this classification. Though there is no real formal definition of a tertiary care hospital, it is generally recognized as a major hospital that has a full complement of services including neonatal care (NICU), pediatrics, general medicine, various branches of surgery and psychiatry, and intensive care units (ICU); or a tertiary care center might be a specialty hospital dedicated to specific subspecialty care (neonatal centers, pediatric centers/children's hospitals, oncology centers, psychiatric hospitals). Patients will often be referred from smaller hospitals in outlying areas to a tertiary hospital for major operations, consultations with medical subspecialists, and when sophisticated intensive care facilities are required.

You are most likely to receive the best and most up-to-date care with state-of-the-art equipment in a tertiary care facility. But it's important to know that you need to do your homework—not all hospitals are created equal, any more than doctors or ultrasounds are!

Choose a hospital that can care

for your twin(s) with increased needs immediately when they are born. To accomplish this, you may need to travel to a hospital far from your home to deliver your babies. Yet the benefits of planning ahead and making the effort to do this far outweigh the inconveniences. The possibility of improved outcomes for your baby or babies is much greater if they're born in a major medical center.

What's more, if your twins are born in a smaller hospital and must be transferred to another hospital for care, you will be separated from them at a very vulnerable time, for them and for you.

If one or both of your twins will need surgery when they are born, or shortly thereafter, meet with surgeon and neonatologists who will be caring for your baby. These consultations will increase your knowledge about the specific nature of your twin's birth defect(s) and will help you to know what to expect when your twins are born.

**Discuss with your doctors** what impact pre-term delivery may have on your babies' chances of survival, especially your twin diagnosed with increased needs. Your doctor may suggest you stop working early in your pregnancy if you have a strenuous job, or may suggest voluntary bedrest as your pregnancy advances in an effort to prevent premature delivery. Although these tactics are not backed by clinical studies, they are quite commonly recommended to avoid additional stress on the expectant mother's body, particularly the muscles of the uterus and the cervix.

If possible, join a support group

specific to the birth defect with which your child has been diagnosed, such as a group of parents whose children have congenital heart defects, as in my case. Connect with families who've been through what you are facing. You'll benefit from knowing someone else survived this ordeal without going insane and you may be able to meet a child living with the same birth defect.

**Families who've experienced** what you're experiencing may be well-equipped to teach you about possible complications to watch for, how to deal with your babies' extended stays in the NICU, questions to ask, hospital routines, and best ways to interact with doctors and nurses.

Learn as much as you can from reliable sources about the birth defect your twin has. You will be your child's best advocate. And believe me, your

baby or babies will need an effective advocate. You can research the subject by talking with medical professionals and support groups. The Internet is a tremendous source of information, but it also contains a lot of misinformation and "myths" that could mislead you or lead to some action that would hurt your babies. My advice is to trust only those Internet sources that are actual medical/clinical resources, such as the American Heart Association and similar medical sites that are truly "clinical" in nature (i.e., WebMD and PubMed).

Last but not least, plan to breastfeed your babies. The amazing health benefits of breastmilk can have a very positive impact on the medical outcome for your twin with physical problems. In some cases, your baby or babies may be unable to breastfeed successfully, but at least be prepared to pump and save your breastmilk for them,

which can be equally beneficial. ♥

*(Sfakianaki, A.K., & Copel, J. [2007]. Routine prenatal ultrasonography as a screening tool. Retrieved from UpToDate, a resource for clinicians. <http://www.utdol.com/utd/content/topic.do?topicKey=antenatal/18078&view=text>)*

Patricia Walters Deskin is a Registered Nurse with a Master's degree in Nursing Education. She is certified in inpatient obstetrics and lactation. Patricia lives near Baltimore. Her MZ/identical twins, Timmy and Tyler, are 2. Timmy had a severe congenital heart defect that ultimately will require at least three surgeries. Both boys have significant developmental delays. Patricia works in Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center's labor & delivery, postpartum, nursery and neonatal care units. She wrote to us and offered to collaborate with Dr. John Wood on writing these **Twins With Increased Needs** columns.



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# ferocious competition: twins can't live together, can't stand to be apart!

By LaToya Stevenson

**Each of my girls must find it difficult to have a sister who looks identical to her walking alongside so many times.**

People have always mixed them up. It started the day they came home from the hospital. "Which one is that, Jordan or Dymond?", family members would ask.

Even I sometimes glimpse one of them running through the kitchen and

her enough to learn what happened, she stuttered, "She finished brushing her teeth before I got in the bathroom." You would have thought the world was coming to an end!

Who finishes homework first or last creates turmoil; who goes first at the dentist's and doctor's offices causes friction; who kisses mommy goodnight first brings on a fight.

I dressed them alike after they were born. And now, that too seems to be part of the competition. My friends and family said dressing the girls alike would anger them to a point where they would rebel and distance themselves from one another. But that's not what has happened at all.

**If something as minor** as their socks don't match, there is a problem. They want everything the same—identical—from hair barrettes to shoes. I believe this is their attempt to maintain equality. If everything is done precisely at the same time and looks the same, they are best friends—no one or nothing can come between them.

Their competition with each other disappears entirely when another child near their age comes around, however. Then, they bond instantly, becoming one entity and ganging up to "be number one" as far as the other child is concerned. I have found myself explaining to parents of other children on many occasions during play dates that my daughters face off against each other at home when no one else is around, contrary to what it looks like when they're displaying their "unified force" against another child.

I've found ways to rectify the competition-problem at home. It will

take a while to completely eradicate, but I know working with them means they won't grow up to be the most competitive human beings on the planet. I began with time in the bathroom (which, coincidentally, is where I first saw the problem). I assign one girl to use the guest bathroom (which I had to redecorate to match the other bathroom), while the other uses their regular bathroom. I set a timer for toothbrushing and facewashing so the girls exit the two bathrooms at the same time.

**With homework** I found that having one daughter do math first, while the other does her reading or spelling, eliminates the race. It enables each one to concentrate on the assignment at hand without worrying about whether or not the other is going to finish first.

I also make sure their extracurricular activities are centered around their own interests, which tend to be different. This way each girl can see her own individual gifts and talents and appreciate herself as a single person.

I've heard from other parents of twins that as they get older, twins' competition grows worse. Honestly, I can't imagine it being any worse than it's been during their early years! But I think there are ways to solve this problem—because already I can see a difference in my girls and their behaviors toward each other. ♥

---

LaToya Stevenson is a single mom who lives in Plano, Tex., with her daughters. LaToya is a recent college graduate who is soon heading to law school. She is an assistant editor with a publishing company and is writing a novel.

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call her by the wrong name. So it's no surprise they're often referred to as one person—the twins.

This is a problem when twins begin to want their individuality. My 7-year-old daughters have always battled each other (as many twins do). Yet their battles have changed as they've grown older. Something as simple as one of them making it to the car before the other can send fists flying.

I walked into their room one morning and flicked on the light to wake them for school. I hummed out their names in a single, gentle call and left to prepare breakfast. As I worked in the kitchen, I heard shouts and rushed to the shared bathroom to find one daughter sliding across the floor on her back in tears. When I finally calmed





Kim and Keith Colacioppo of White Plains, N.Y., hold their twins John and Mark, born Sept. 8 at White Plains Hospital. The Colacioppo's were part of a twin-boom in September, when five sets arrived over the course of 13-days, breaking hospital records and filling the NICU. All 10 babies were healthy and went home starting in late September.



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Catherine and Benjamin, 8 months



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# from the horse's mouth

By Jennifer Jordan

**Q:** My twins seem to resent the fact they are twins. They don't like looking similar and don't enjoy being the same age. Once they even asked why they had to be twins. Is there anything I can do to help them appreciate their uniqueness?

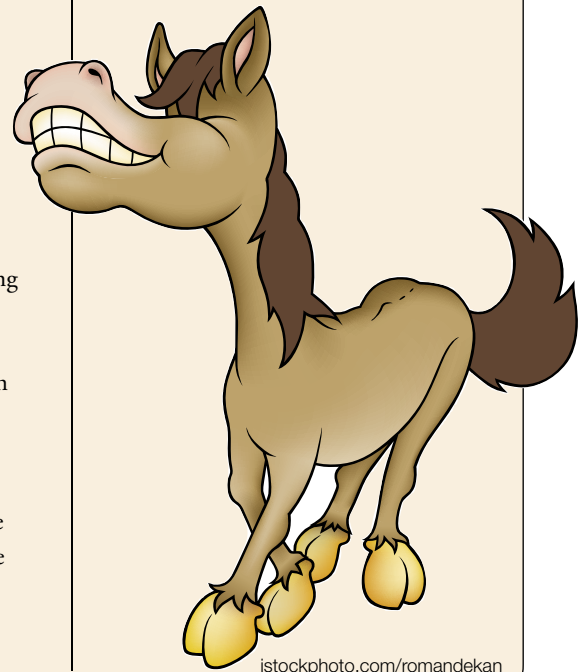
**A:** Admittedly, being a twin can be hard...on the twins themselves, and—especially when it comes to months of unending 2 a.m. feedings—hard on the parents. The only people it's *not* hard on are diaper manufacturers, who surely reap immediate benefits.

Still, being a twin or having twins isn't impossibly hard: The positives

definitely outweigh the negatives. (Ahem, right Mom and Dad?)

From each twin's point of view, the difficulty has nothing to do with parental responsibility—it has nothing to do with double the jars of baby food or, when one parent is left alone, instantly being outnumbered by children. Instead, it has to do with one thing: Feeling a single identity is up for grabs between two people who both want—and need—it desperately.

Ironically, being a twin is such a unique thing, and yet people who are twins often feel anything but. On the contrary, as we constantly encounter our twin in the same grade and same activities, we simply feel as if there is



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no escape from this trap they're in.

Looking back, I wouldn't say I resented being a twin. After all, I could do nothing about it. (My parents vetoed my "Put the sister up for adoption" plan.) But there were times when the flames of jealousy were kindled, if ever so slightly.

It's nothing my twin did to make this happen. Though we fought with each other, we fought like siblings and not like twins. We're identical twins, but our fighting styles, for instance, were anything but identical. She would bite; I would cry. See? Completely different.

Our twin-resentment grew not so much from how we acted towards each other as much as it resulted from the actions of other people towards each of us. Along these lines, if parents help their twins avoid these situations and reactions, they'll help their kids embrace the idea of being a twin, instead of hating it by the tender age of 3.

You've probably heard all of this before, but it bears repeating, many times over. I will plead with parents of twins to throw the following—seemingly harmless—actions out the minivan window:

- Having your twins dress alike or having them participate in the same extracurricular activities (i.e., soccer or dance) when they don't want to.
- Always calling your twins "the twins" instead of using their individual names.
- Punishing both twins when only

one is at fault.

- Using the phrase "Because you're twins" to explain why they have to share toys or share a bedroom.
- Always giving each twin the same birthday or holiday presents (or allowing friends and relatives to do so).
- Telling twins they should act more alike, or constantly comparing them to one another.

Ultimately, anything that forces the concept of being a twin upon twins is worth avoiding. Twins, like all kids, want to be individuals.

I'm not saying everything on this list will irreparably damage your twins if "the bad stuff" happens once in a while. Occasionally calling your twins "the twins" won't cause them to storm the local department store and burn all Mary Kate and Ashley merchandise. Still, these are good rules of thumb.

When it comes down to it, twins wishing they weren't twins isn't much different from children with siblings wishing they were an only-child. On occasion, it's bound to happen. How you act toward your twinnies will determine whether they enjoy life or resent their DNA. ♡

Jennifer Jordan, 29, is a writer working in Denver. Her twin sister Kimberly is a social worker in a Denver suburb. They spend hours trying to read each other's minds and they express equal irritation about never landing a Doublemint gum commercial.

### TWINFO

Currently, ART (assisted reproduction techniques) such as *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) accounts for at least half (50%) of all twin-sets of babies born in the U.S. annually, says Gary Steinman, MD, PhD, a leading researcher on twinning. (See Dr. Steinman's book, *Womb Mates*, at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com))

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# The Quadfather — A domestic dad's ruminations

By Mike Poff

**S**o much has changed in my 40+ years. Things once unheard-of are now the stuff of our everyday lives. TVs have color; I have kids. They ride in an SUV watching DVDs on an LCD-TV wearing wireless headphones; I listen to my favorite cable TV station on satellite radio.

They watch, I listen, and we zip through the woods on back roads near our Blue Ridge mountain home.

I often wonder what my dear old snuff-dipping, bonnet-wearing Grandmother would think of our 21st century life. I especially wonder what she'd think of our quads.

Oh, did I forget to mention my wife and I have a set of quads? I sometimes get a bit lost in all the commotion. Yep, we have two wonderful daughters ages 12 and 9, and a set of 3-year-old quadruplets.

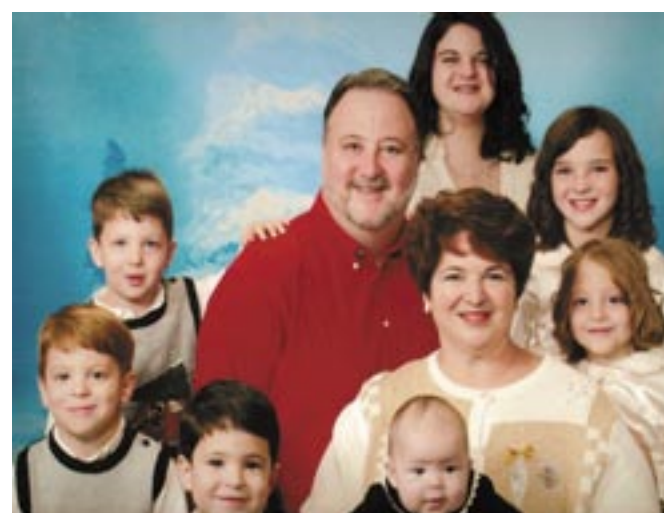
Our family doesn't fit your average demographic by almost any measure. We have six children from three pregnancies. My wife, besides being a gold-medal mother, is a very successful entrepreneur. Which led me to my role as domestic-dad to six. (None of these was a goal on our list during premarital counseling.)

When asked, I say I prefer the title "Quadfather." Just how Granny would handle this interests me, because I frequently encounter varied reactions and odd comments in my quadfather role. Granny would be heartened to know we've stuck close to the faith...not the Brethren faith that was hers but more the interdenominational, new apostolic-reformational, you-don't-need-a-suit-and-tie (or beard or bonnet) spirit-filled Christianity type. This would probably swamp her born-in-the-19th-century boat than all other changes combined.

**I feel fortunate** to have been born early enough in the 1900s to know much of the old folks and old ways. Yet, I'm still young enough to be shoulder deep in my kids' era.

I'll never forget my Granny forcefully asserting her conviction—back when the '69 Mustang was a new ride—that the first Moon Walks were staged in Hollywood.

Nor will I forget the times she lost herself in the titanic struggle of good vs. evil as demonstrated on her favorite TV wrasslin' shows. She insisted with ferocity that these events were "real" and "important for our personal sanctity" and our national well-being.



Mike and Pam Poff with their quads-plus-three: Clockwise from top, circling Mike and Pam, are Meagan, Rachel, Franchesca, Alexandra, Nathaniel, Matthew and Jonathan.

Granny had a firm grasp on the real stuff—the serious truth and importance of family, and the need to make them the priority. Granny was a blessing in my life. By the time I was 14, my mom had been through two divorces and a nervous breakdown. About 40% of my growing



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up was done in a single-parent household with Granny acting as mom. My other grandmother, likewise, was raising several of her own grandchildren. Both were grandmothers were widowed before I could walk. I can't remember either grandfather, and I never had a close or long-lasting father/son relationship while a child.

The events of my life often remind me what I missed. As I've struggled through many long nights and endless diaper changes, I've had an opportunity to be the type of dad I never had.

I meet people who think we're wrong to have so many kids, or even to be pitied. They view the responsibilities and expenses of a large family such as ours as things that would lower their lifestyles, limit their entertainment opportunities, and challenge their perceptions about family life.

To the contrary, however, I believe I've witnessed the miraculous. I've experienced amusement, bemusement and encouragement along my road less traveled.

Our first two singlets failed to prepare us, mentally or physically, for our fourfold multi-blessings. The quads simply blew our comfort zone to the horizon and beyond.

**If you can imagine,** we went through 145 to 150 diapers every five days—yes, that's about 30 changes a day! When the babies came home from the hospital, we were on a three-hour cycle, and by the time Pam and I had each baby changed, fed and bathed, we had, oh, maybe 40 minutes left to sit down for coffee or grab a quick nap before doing it all over again. No nannies, no hired help. Just the two of us, assisted periodically by one good friend plus a neighbor's daughter to help us out for a day here and there. We went every night for about nine months without knowing what real sleep was, and Pam was working nearly all that time. She owns her own company and was back in the work saddle about a month after our quadbabies were born.

Oddly enough, this was probably the best thing that could have happened for our family—and for me as a dad, husband and person. It taught me family comes first, always, just as Granny said. Without an awakening like the quads gave me, it could have been too easy to get lost in the race. Performance isn't a priority, I learned. Each baby was the priority.

My old snuff-dipping Granny knew this. In her 19th century way, she walked and talked that belief, never allowing herself to be sidetracked by the hectic and unfamiliar spiral of events swirling around her. My 21st century set of quadruplets brought that truth back into focus for me. Because of them, I walk a rare road. That's what having babies in sets forces you to do: Focus! And thank goodness for it! ♥

Mike Poff is a 40-something at-home father who lives in the Appalachian Mountain town of Big Island, Va. Mike's wife, Pam, owns a case-management firm that operates in four states in the Mid-Atlantic region. Before refining his role as domestic dad, Mike was a news reporter, disc jockey, copywriter and production manager. He is perpetually working on his Masters of Theology in his abundant spare time. His and Pam's seven children range from 14 down to 9 months. Their quackkiddos are now 5.

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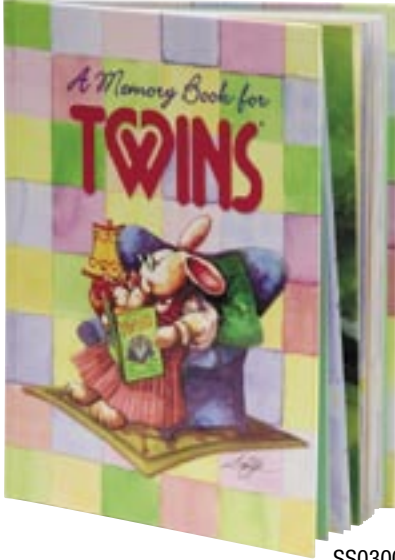
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Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of the gift of twinship and the promises and encouragement a mother gives to her children in return. Available with blue, pink or yellow border,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

### 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! 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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SS05002 Unframed Art \$16.99 each  
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## Tiny Fingers and Tiny Toes

**Celebrate twins and create a lasting keepsake!**

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

**A. Fingers - SF90035 \$39.99**

**B. Toes - SF90036 \$39.99**



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.

**SS06004 \$24.99**



*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 9½". Circus Train is 14" x 10½") They each hold three, 2 1/8" x 2 1/8" photographs.

**SF05001 Noah's Ark \$19.99**

**SF05002 Circus Train \$19.99**



## Twice as Nice Photo Frame

This frame from Russ Baby's Widdle Ones Collection will look fabulous on your dresser, bookcase shelf or fireplace mantle. Made of ceramic with a glass insert and flocked backing, the frame provides a unique opportunity to show off your twins and the happiness and fun they bring to your life. Individually boxed. 8 3/4" x 6 3/4" - holds one 4" x 6" photograph.

**SS06001 \$12.99**



## "Two Peas in a Pod" Personalized Afghan

Clever original design created by an artist with twins and exclusive to us. Woven throw in a large size is personalized with your twins' names and their birth date in green embroidery. 100% cotton, washable. 46" x 67". Shipped directly from manufacturer. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. No express delivery.

**SF90112 \$49.99**

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

## "Discover Wildlife, Raise Twins" Ceramic Wall Plaque

A sentiment every parent of twins can relate to! This handcrafted ceramic plaque will tickle your funny bone and keep your sense of humor charged when you most need it. Leather hanger. 5¾"H x 7¼"W.

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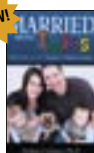
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## GENERAL PARENTING

### Married with Twins

**Joshua Coleman, Ph.D.** **\$14.95** **NEW!**  
When twins arrive, the dynamics of a marriage change as parenthood brings challenges and rewards. Popular TWINS columnist Dr. Josh uses humor and professional expertise to help parents manage their feelings and challenges with ease. *Paperback, 108 pages.*



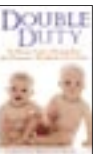
### Ready or Not... Here We Come!

**Elizabeth Lyons** **\$16.00**  
This mom of twins recognized that raising twins wouldn't be easy. In her multiples birthing class, she met a group of women who weathered their pregnancies together. Lyons and her "multiple sorority" survive the hardships and humor of their first year with twins. *Paperback, 165 pages.*



### Double Duty: The parents' guide to raising twins, from pregnancy through school years

**Christina Baglivi Tinglov** **\$14.95**  
Real-life solutions, parent-tested suggestions and expert advice on everything from pregnancy-related weight gain to whether or not to put the children in the same class in school. Each chapter has a "top 5" list of tips. *Paperback, 201 pages.*



### It's Twins!

**Susan M. Heim** **\$17.95**  
Navigating the often-turbulent waters of parenthood from birth through high school. Susan Heim offers a firm hand on the wheel for parents of twins and higher order multiples. Real-life stories provide inspiration and guidance. *Paperback, 201 pages.*



### TWINS! Pregnancy, birth, and the first year of life

**Connie Agnew, M.D., Alan Klein, M.D., Jill Alison Ganon** **\$18.95**  
Discusses physical, medical, emotional, psychological issues, with emphasis on twin-specific situations. *Paperback, 360 pages.*



### Mothering Twins:

**Advice and support from five moms who've been there and lived to tell the tale** **\$14.00**  
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### Raising Twins: What parents want to know (and what twins want to tell them)

**Eileen M. Pearlman, Ph.D., Jill Alison Ganon** **\$18.95**  
From a leading expert in twin development, this book blends guidance, interviews and illustrative cases about physical, emotional and cognitive development, birth through adolescence. *Paperback, 267 pages.*



### The Multiples Manual: Preparing and Caring for Twins or Triplets

**Lynn Lorenz** **\$13.95**  
Written by an identical twin who is the mother of triplets, *The Multiples Manual* is a compendium of over 1,000 indispensable tips and ideas for new parents of multiples. Covering topics ranging from crying to feeding, bathing to safety and more. *The Multiples Manual* entertains as well as informs. *Paperback, 288 pages.*



### The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins: From pre-birth to first school days—the essential book for those expecting two or more

**Elizabeth Friedrich, Cherry Rowland** **\$13.95**  
Authors are mothers of twins, deliver a bounty of useful guidance. Readers tap into a wealth of practical tips and advice from doctors, nurses and dozens of other parents of twins. *Paperback, 304 pages.*



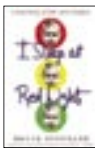
### Oh Yes You Can Breastfeed Twins! Plus More Tips for Simplifying Life with Twins

**April Rudat, MS, Ed, RD, LDN** **\$19.95**  
Using up-to-date research and her own practical experience, dietician April Rudat covers everything a new mother needs to know about breastfeeding her young babies. *Paperback, 252 pages.*



### I Sleep at Red Lights

**Bruce Stockler** **\$13.95**  
Every parent of multiples will identify with Bruce Stockler's hilarious adventures with his triplet babies. Bruce is the primary parent for his four kids, who include a slightly older singleton son. Bruce is a former stand-up comic who worked as a joke writer for Jay Leno. He is laugh out loud funny. *Paperback, 336 pages.*



### The Art of Parenting Twins

**Patricia Malmstrom, M.A., Janet Poland** **\$14.00**  
Pat Malmstrom, founder of Twin Services, Inc., has adult twins and holds degrees in early childhood education and special ed. Highly readable. Covers organizing your home, breastfeeding, "twinshock," developmental delays, identity issues. *Paperback, 333 pages.*



### The Twinship Sourcebook 2: Toddler Twins

**The Editors of TWINS™ Magazine** **\$14.95**  
Everyday questions are addressed in this practical guidebook. Twins and triplets who are moving beyond their babyhood—and, oh boy, can they move!—make every day a challenge and lots of fun! Insights from experts and other parents. Topics include biting, discipline, creativity and much more. A perfect gift. *Paperback, 198 pages.*



### Mothering Multiples

**Karen Kerkoff Gromada** **\$18.95**  
**NEW REVISED EDITION!** A maternal-child health care nurse for almost 30 years and a parent of twins herself, Karen Kerkoff Gromada has invaluable experience in working with mothers of multiples. This is a guide for new and expectant mothers. *Paperback, 286 pages.*



### Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Parents of Twins and Multiples

**Susan M. Heim & TWINS™ Magazine**  
**Cartoons by John M. Byrne** **\$13.95**  
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### Heart Two Heart: Words of Wisdom from the Real Experts: Seven Mothers of Twins on Raising Twins the First Year

**Lisa Blau, Julie Diamond Bobbitt, Shelley deMontesquiou, Nicole Davis, Stacy R. Carter, Heidi Mark, Lisa Rojany Buccieri, Connie A. Gilbert** **\$21.95**  
Written by seven experienced mothers of Twins, *Heart Two Heart* gives new mothers of multiples the straight talk about day-to-day life with their twins. How do you feed two infants? How can a family manage? These and other questions for which new moms want simple answers. *Paperback, 308 pages.*



### Twinspiration: Real life advice from Pregnancy Through the First Year

**Cheryl Lage** **\$16.95**  
Mother of twins Darren and Sarah, Cheryl Lage uses humor, personal anecdotes and a friendly, conversational tone in her helpful book, *Twinspiration*. The host of the popular online twins website [twinsights.com](http://twinsights.com), and a contributor to TWINS™ Magazine, Lage provides insightful, honest advice and practical information for new and expecting parents of multiples. *Paperback, 320 pages.*



### Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking

**Jerry Wyckoff, Ph.D.; Barbara C. Unell** **\$9.00**  
Every parent of 1 to 5-year-olds knows children often whine, refuse to eat, throw tantrums. Unell, founder of TWINS™ Magazine and a parent of big twins, teamed with Wyckoff to help parents discipline children without damaging self-esteem or natural curiosity. Revised and expanded. *Paperback, 160 pages.*



### Nanny to the Rescue! Straight Talk and Super Tips for Parenting in the Early Years

**Michelle LaRowe** **\$15.99**  
LaRowe's book provides parents with proven solutions to common childcare situations. A TWINS™ Magazine contributor, LaRowe has been nanny to 4 families with twins! She's a pro at raising twins. A no-nonsense approach for parents who want to raise happy, healthy children. *Paperback, 288 pages.*



### Raising Twins After the First Year:

**Everything You Need to Know About Bringing Up Twins – From Toddlers to Preteens** **\$15.95**  
**Karen Gottesman**  
From managing potty training to understanding sibling rivalry and mood swings, Gottesman provides useful and comforting information, often from her own experience as a mother. *Paperback, 268 pages.*



### Ready or Not...There We Go! The REAL Expert's Guide to the Toddler Years With Twins

**Elizabeth Lyons** **\$16.00**  
Mother of twins Elizabeth Lyons and her "multiple sorority" tackle the challenges of parenting toddler twins in this highly entertaining and witty sequel to her first book, "Ready or Not... Here We Come!" Lyons reports on her own personal experiences with her twins Henry and Jack, and details confident solutions to common parenting situations from managing twin temper tantrums in aisle 9 to maintaining her marriage. *Paperback, 260 pages.*



### Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples

**Christina Baglivi Tinglov** **\$16.95**  
From kindergarten to high school, twin children face unique challenges and opportunities at school and at home. Tinglov provides time-tested advice for parents of twins and higher order multiples who are entering their school-age years. *Paperback, 232 pages.*



## PREGNANCY/EXPECTING

### When You're Expecting Twins, Triplets, or Quads Revised Ed.

**Barbara Luke, Sc.D., M.P.H., R.D. and Tamara Eberlein** **\$19.95**  
Newly revised and updated, Dr. Barbara Luke of the University of Miami School of Medicine and mother of twins Tamara Eberlein provide specific, empowering information for parents of multiples about health care providers, diet, activity and rest restrictions, preterm labor, and post-pregnancy feeding and care. Also included are 50 nutritious recipes for optimal birth weight of multiple children, and numerous charts, graphs and illustrations. *Paperback, 420 pages.*



### The Multiple Pregnancy Sourcebook

**Nancy Bowers, RN, BSN** **\$17.95**  
A perinatal nurse and mother of twins writes on pregnancy, infertility technology, prenatal testing, nutrition and development, preterm labor, birth and the NICU. *Paperback, 420 pages.*



### Expecting Twins, Triplets And More

**Rachel McClintock Franklin, MD** **\$14.95**  
Oklahoma family physician Rachel McClintock Franklin is the mother of twins born in 2001. A frequent media contributor, Dr. Franklin provides the "girlfriend's guide to twin pregnancies" in this informative and often humorous book. Includes information on nutrition and exercise and helpful reference guides. A reassuring book about twin pregnancies from someone who has been through the experience. *Paperback, 208 pages.*



### Womb Mates A Modern Guide to Fertility and Twinning

**Gary D. Steinman, M.D., Ph.D. and Christina Vermi, MA, RD** **\$19.95**  
Dr. Steinman's "Womb Mates" explains in clear, understandable language how twins happen. The authors shed light on much of the mystery and wonder surrounding the magical world multiples. *Paperback, 256 pages.*



## SLEEP

### The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night

**Elizabeth Pantley** **\$14.95**  
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### Nighttime Parenting: How to Get Your Baby and Child to Sleep

**William Sears, M.D.** **\$9.95**  
Vigorous opponent of letting babies cry it out, Sears offers dozens of tips to help you get your babies (and toddlers) to sleep and stay asleep. Revised. *Paperback, 204 pages.*



### Good Night, Sleep Tight

**Kim West and Joanne Kenen** **\$13.95**  
Maryland social worker Kim West is affectionately known as The Sleep Lady® to her satisfied clients. With co-author Joanne Kenen, a journalist and social worker herself, West offers easy to learn skills and techniques to help children sleep and stay asleep for longer periods. Sleepless parents of twins will find this book indispensable. *Paperback, 356 pages.*



### The Baby Sleep Solution A Proven Program to Teach Your Baby to Sleep Twelve Hours at Night

**Suzu Giordano with Lisa Abidin** **\$10.95**  
Providing a step-by-step plan similar to a cook book, "The Baby Sleep Solution" Suzu Giordano and Lisa Abidin provide family-tested techniques and helpful tips that can help parents train their young babies to sleep. *Paperback, 158 pages.*



## TWIN PSYCHOLOGY

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

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



### Indivisible by Two

**Nancy L. Segal, PhD** **\$24.95**  
A fraternal twin herself, Dr. Nancy Segal is a professor of Psychology at California State University. The author of *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*, Dr. Segal brings us the stories of the lives of twelve sets of multiples. *Hardcover, 280 pages.*



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

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




### Identical Strangers A Memoir of Twins Separated and Reunited


**Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein** **\$25.95**  
**NEW!** NEW! Twins Paula and Elyse share their story of living their lives separately and then reuniting at age 35. Writing with honesty about their life-altering discovery that a stranger shares their DNA, Elyse and Paula write in alternating voices of their journey toward the intimacy of twins that was denied them for much of their lives. *Hardcover, 288 pages.*








**My Personal Story in ABCs**  
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Your child will be delighted with the chance to play the major role in telling his or her own personal story. Illustrated by artist Jenny Campbell, this book allows your child to include important information about their lives. Paperback, 32 pages.

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Dad gives Jan and Ann sprinkling cans to water the garden, but they give Fluffy, the pet rabbit, a shower instead. Paperback, 20 pages.

**Look-A-Likes Don't Act A-Like**  
Arrin Freeman \$12.95 **NEW!**  
Author Arrin Freeman is an identical twin who has captured her recollections of "growing up twinnie" in her very special book. This is a wonderful book to read to twins as they grow older, because the sisters in this book look exactly alike and are constantly compared, but they're really as different as night and day! Ages 2 to 7. Hardcover, 44 pages.

**Buddies: A Story About Twins**  
Michelle Donaldson, illustrations by Robert Peltz \$5.95  
Brother and sister buddies discover how differences can create a special bond for twins. For ages 2-5. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Grandpa's Twins**  
Vanessa Welsh, illustrations by Mary Peterson \$5.95  
Grandpa shows his twin grandsons a farm that is full of animals that come in pairs too! Ages 2-5. Paperback, 16 pages.

**The Twin Team**  
Sandi S. McLaughlin, illustrations by Jerianne VanDijk \$5.95  
The boys of the Twin Team fight together to battle bedtime fears. Ages 2-5. Paperback, 16 pages.

**The Twins Take Turns**  
Nickole Shyne-White \$16.00  
Dennis and Derek look alike, but have different interests, which sometimes leads to conflicts over who gets to spend more time with their mother. Mommy has a solution to their problem. For ages 2 to 4. Paperback, 32 pages.

**Two Times the Fun**  
Beverly Cleary \$11.99  
Award-winning author and mother of twins Beverly Cleary, features 4-year-old twins Janet and Jimmy who don't always act alike or even like the same things. For ages 4 to 8 or for reading to younger children. Hardcover, 96 pages.

**Sweet Jasmine, Nice Jackson**  
Robbie H. Harris \$16.95  
Jasmine and Jackson are two-year-old twins and are out to explore the world. A delightful and entertaining story for young toddler-age twins that also includes informative short sidebars with information for parents about twins. Hardcover, 40 pages.

**My Best Friend**  
Margie Fincher \$5.95  
Book of rhyme teases readers with the question, "Can you guess who my friend can be? I'll give you hints and you will see." Paperback, 16 pages.

**Simon Says**  
Diana Hamilton Geller \$5.95  
Firstborn Simon flaunts his seniority over Max, who finds a new way to handle the issue. Paperback, 16 pages.

**One Was Not Enough**  
Lori Menning \$5.95  
Mama tells her 5-year-old twins she had two babies because "one was not enough." Paperback, 16 pages.

**You Can't Trick Me**  
Yvonne Field-Bagwell \$5.95  
Identical twins playfully trick friends, teachers, and even Grammy about who's who—but can never trick Mom. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Wishing on a Star**  
Doni J. DeGennaro \$5.95  
As 5-year-old dizygotic twins gaze at the stars, Mom tells them of her wish every night when she saw the first bright star. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Michael's Brothers**  
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Older sibling is jealous of the constant attention the twins receive, but learns to get over it. Paperback, 16 pages.

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Cynthia Johnson \$5.95  
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Nancy Griffin \$5.95  
Older sibling learns to accept twin babies. It's confusing and hard, but with time, love grows. Paperback, 16 pages.

**The Twins & the Birthday Party**  
Marcia Murphy \$5.95  
Lucy is invited to a party, but her twin isn't. Boo hoo. Then he has a special day alone with Mom. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Three is the Perfect Number**  
Kimberly Carey \$5.95  
Triplets jump rope, play restaurant, sneak cookies and give parents a big bear hug. Stimulates imagination, self-directed play. Paperback, 16 pages.

**One Baby, Two Baby, Three Baby, Four**  
Christi Rober \$5.95  
All multiples will giggle when they see quads crawling, visiting a zoo, crying, taking a bath and, finally, falling asleep. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Always Zany ABCs for Twins**  
Dawn Mitchell \$2.98  
Romp through the alphabet with playful rhymes. Great for teaching twins the ABCs. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Twinship is in Your Heart**  
Stacy Dye \$5.95  
On a day at the park, mom poses a riddle: Can twins find other twins? Dispels twin stereotypes and teaches individuality. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Kevin and Ben**  
Gail S. Coleman \$5.95  
Identical twins see differences emerge as they get older ... yet feel so lucky to have a twin. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Family Reunion**  
Lynn Burgess \$5.95  
Twins dislike having their heads patted by relatives who can't tell them apart and who always ask who is older, who is smarter. Story helps twins learn to handle adult silliness. Paperback, 16 pages.

**My, You Have Your Hands Full!**  
Amber Lappin \$5.95  
Simple rhymes tell how full life is with multiples, and what is most full is Mommy's heart. Paperback, 16 pages.

**It Takes Two**  
Tammie Blackburn \$5.95  
Twins complement each other: One draws pictures, the other writes words, but to get the whole job done, it takes two. Paperback, 16 pages.

**The Little Green House**  
Beth Covino \$5.95  
Twins introduce "our two beds, two blankets, two pillows for resting our heads." But some things differ... one likes to read, the other loves music. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Where Are the Twins?**  
Maegan M. Struble \$5.95  
The twins are playing hide-and-seek. Daddy and Mommy find their older sister, the dog, the bird and the cat, but where are the twins? Paperback, 16 pages.

**His Sister, Her Brother**  
Wendy Black Marcarella \$5.95  
Boy/girl twins have dissimilar personalities, like different foods and activities, but figure out how much they love each other. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Imagination Collaboration**  
Doris Goldstein \$5.95  
Twins turn the couch into an airplane and imagine forks and spoons having a party. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Twins Go to Bed**  
Ellen Weiss \$3.99  
Twins get ready for bedtime by brushing their teeth, getting into their pajamas and settling down for the evening. Illustrated by Sam Williams. Paperback, 24 pages.

**Twins Have a Fight**  
Ellen Weiss \$3.99  
There are new toys for the twins, but both want to play with the same one! British illustrator Sam Williams helps bring this story to life. Paperback, 24 pages.

**Twins in the Park**  
Ellen Weiss \$3.99  
Story of twins on an afternoon trip to the city park. Charming images by British illustrator Sam Williams, story tells of fun, games and discoveries. Paperback, 24 pages.

**Twins Take a Bath**  
Ellen Weiss \$3.99  
Kids splash and splash, get clean and ready for bed. Features images by British illustrator Sam Williams. Paperback, 24 pages.

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

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

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

**Jan and Ann are Twins**  
Barbara Sherwood \$5.95  
Look-alike twins switch places. Mom takes Jan to Ann's favorite place, and Dad takes Ann to Jan's favorite. Oops! Paperback, 20 pages.

**Twin Tales**  
Donna Jackson \$10.95  
Including both scientific research and interesting personal stories, this well-illustrated energetic discussion of twins will appeal to inquisitive younger readers. Donna Jackson's book explores twins and their similarities, as well as their differences. Hardcover, 48 pages.

**My Twin My Friend**  
Lynne Crump \$16.95  
The joy of being a twin is explored in this entertaining, rhyming story. Twins have a special friend who is both alike and different in their own way. Together they make a great pair. Hardcover, 32 pages.

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

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

**The Chairs Where Pam & Sam Sit**  
Cynthia Grannell \$5.95  
In the style of "This is the house that Jack built," the milk lands on the floor, the cat licks the milk, the cookie falls on the cat and so on. Paperback, 16 pages.

**Tiny Tired Twins**  
Elizabeth DeArmond \$5.95  
Bedtime story filled with illustrations of twin animal babies, book delivers a peaceful sleepy message. Paperback, 16 pages.

**I Love You the Purplest**  
Barbara M. Joosse \$15.95  
"Who do you love the best?" asks one of mama's children "I love you the reddest," she answers. "I love you bluest," she says to another. Story about the unique love a mother has for each of her children. Perfect for parents with twins! Hardcover, 24 pages.

**Just Like Me**  
Barbara J. Neasi \$4.95  
Simple story written by a mother of twins, describes how twins are alike and yet different. Vocabulary list helps children learn new words. Paperback, 32 pages.

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

**Guess Who Needs Glasses? Bumpy and Boo Visit the Eye Doctor**  
Sheri Manson, illustrations, Marcela Cabrera \$15.95  
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.

**(doubletakes)**

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



**1**

Brandon and Brock  
11 months  
Mitchell, SD



**2**

Matthew and Mia  
9 months  
Park Ridge, IL



**5**

Jacob and Andrew  
15 months  
Englewood, OH



**8**

William and Anna  
7 months  
Gurnee, IL



**3**

Zack and Kyle  
6 months  
St. Petersburg, IL



**6**

Cole and Ty  
5 months  
Flushing, MI



**9**

Tyler and Ryan  
5 months  
Clark, NJ



**4**

Brooke and Paige  
7 months  
Elmwood, NJ



**7**

Preston and Britton  
1 year  
Brooklyn, NY



**10**

Reagan and Madison  
4 years  
Knoxville, TN



**Photo Tips:**

- Sharp focus
- Crisp, vivid color (no blue, red, or green cast)
- Heads close together
- Bright, attractive lighting (high contrast, no "red eye")
- Uncluttered backgrounds
- Happy children interacting with each other

Photos for each upcoming issue are selected 3 months prior to publication. The volume of photos received precludes individual responses. All photos must be accompanied by a signed photo release form to be considered for publication. Go to [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) for photo release form—click on Double Takes Photos.

- Place your address label plus phone # on the back of each photo (or write softly with permanent marker).
- Identify each child, age in photo, twin-type (dizygotic/fraternal, monozygotic/identical, or unknown).
- Attach signed, completed photo release form with tape to back of each photo submitted.

Send photographs to:

TWINS Double Takes, Attn. Art Director, 11211 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 101, Centennial, CO 80112-3851  
NOTE: We cannot use any professional photographs. Photos will not be returned. All photos become the property of TWINS.



**17**

Alexis and Jenna  
2 years  
Warren, NJ



**11**

Sarah and Paige  
2 years  
Wayne, NJ



**14**

Kevin and Tommy  
3 years  
Newark, DE



**18**

Kayla and Kendyl  
15 months  
Desert Hills, AZ



**12**

Brooke and Alex  
9 months  
Republic, MO



**15**

Nickolas and Peyton  
15 months  
Commerce Twp, MI



**19**

Myah and Maci  
10 months  
Scandinavia, WI



**13**

Sydney and Megan  
5 months  
San Antonio, TX



**16**

Tyler and Jasmine  
5 months  
Sunnyvale, CA

5 - MZ	15 - DZ	10 - DZ	ZM - 10
4 - DZ	14 - DZ	ZD - 9	ZD - 9
3 - MZ	13 - DZ	ZD - 8	ZM - 3
2 - DZ	12 - MZ	ZD - 7	ZD - 2
1 - MZ	11 - NK	6 - MZ	16 - DZ

Based on parental reports:

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# if you feel you're losing it completely, you may be suffering from FTMM syndrome

By Cheryl Maguire

**An FTMM sufferer feels tired ALL the time and wants to go to sleep by 8 p.m.** An FTMM patient also experiences loss of hearing, extreme anxiety, forgetfulness, and delusions.

In its early stages, FTMM tiredness is related to feeding multiple babies 24 hours a day. As it progresses, FTMM exhaustion is closely linked to following multiple toddlers as they explore their environment.

Loss of hearing that accompanies this syndrome could be either physical or psychological in nature. Screaming, crying and whining to which the FTMM suffered is exposed each day may render the patient unable to physically hear. Conversely, exposure to so much loud noise on an ongoing basis may mean psychologically the patient doesn't notice it anymore. This is often seen in a restaurant when it appears as if parents of young children cannot hear their child's screams during dinner.

Feelings of extreme anxiety are present with FTMM Syndrome. Anxiety is related to any issue involving the patient's multiple children. Some examples of anxiety-related questions are: Why are they crying? Why didn't they poop today? Why do they have a rash? Why aren't they eating? Why aren't they talking yet? Why are they throwing up? Why is one child doing (fill in the blank) and the other not?

Anxiety that accompanies FTMM is typically something the patient didn't experience before giving birth to twins. For example, if the patient had eczema before having children she didn't think twice about it. Suddenly,

when the patient's children have eczema the patient begins frantically reading books about it, consulting doctors and a nutritionist, spending hours searching the Internet to find information, and trying every home remedy known to man.

The person experiencing FTMM cannot seem to remember anything. The patient might find herself writing everything down to assist with memory lapses only to misplace the lists. The

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**Are you forgetting things? Unable to hear your spouse and children? Biting your nails and wringing your hands? Can't relax?**

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**No big deal—it's just FTMM! And I'll bet you're seeing threes and fours of things, too, aren't you?**

---

individual suffering from this syndrome may experience a feeling with FTMM that she is completely losing her mind.

Delusions usually manifest themselves once the twins become toddlers. One woman with FTMM reported she removed one child from their double stroller, and placed him alongside. Then she carefully removed the second child from the stroller. After placing the second child on the ground she turned and found a third child in the stroller. Nearby adults told her the first toddler had climbed back into the stroller while she removed the second child. Another woman reported finding toys or other items throughout her house that she had put away only

seconds earlier.

FTMM is diagnosed based on experience—if an individual recognizes the format of this article to be similar to other disease-related articles she has researched and read on the Internet's many medical/clinical and pediatric care sites, there is a good chance she is suffering from this disorder.

FTMM treatment options—the most obvious treatment would be to have another child, which would help reduce symptoms of anxiety. The patient would then not have time to worry about anything. This treatment, however, may have side effects—it could cause other symptoms to increase. Other possible treatments include going shopping, hiring a babysitter or spending time with friends.

An FTMM sufferer normally is able to return to normal activities within 20 years, if lucky. By then, most patients don't understand what "normal" means anymore.

FTMM, defined: First-time-mom-of-multiples; giving birth to two or more babies at the same time, without previously having had children.

Related diseases/conditions: See STMM. Many symptoms are similar, but may be less severe in nature than with FTMM. ♥

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Cheryl Maguire has bachelor's and master's degrees in Counseling Psychology from Boston College. She has worked as a counselor helping children and families. Cheryl lives in East Bridgewater, Mass., with her husband Bob and boy/girl twins, Logan and Lindsay, 2.

# Searching everywhere for the greatest twin stroller?

## Here's one stroller you shouldn't pass by!

Weighing only 32 pounds and measuring a slim 29 inches in width, the Urban Double Mountain Buggy has two swiveling front wheels that provide excellent maneuverability. The 12-inch air-filled tires and shock absorbers provide a smooth ride and the fully padded seats can be independently set at angles from upright to nearly horizontal. The Urban Double unfolds with a single hand, and parents will appreciate the spacious storage basket, cup holder and numerous pockets.

## Here's what readers are saying about the

### Urban Double Mountain Buggy:

---

"I bought mine when my boys were 6 mos. My boys will be 3 in October and we still use it. Words cannot express how much I love this stroller. Worth every cent."

---

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

---

"The MBUD is an amazing stroller and is so incredibly easy to push. It is a side by side stroller that easily fits through doors and aisles. I also have a kiddy board attached to the back for my 2 yr old. This is a dream stroller and well worth every bit I spent on it!"

---

"The Mountain Buggy is so easy to use and get in and out of the vehicle. It is definitely worth the purchase!!!!!!!!!"

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