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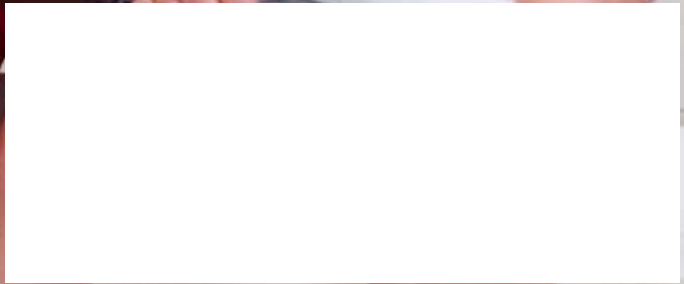
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Allie and Andie England celebrated their 1st birthday in May. Parents are Dan and Kate England of Colorado.



Cover photo taken by Betsy from 'Portraits by Betsy' located in Fort Collins, Colorado.
www.portraitsbybetsy.com

TWINS

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Keep Your Kids Safe This Summer...

Don't you think that being a parent is like wearing your heart on the outside of your body at all times? That's what it feels like to me. So when one of our kids gets hurt (physically and/or emotionally) as parents, we do feel their pain. That is probably why we walk around the house like the safety patrol constantly monitoring our environment for all of the hidden dangers that could surface at any moment. Sometimes no matter how hard we try and how much diligence we use each day, injuries happen anyway. Trying to figure out a way to stay calm and not freak out when they get hurt is still something I really struggle with when raising four active and energetic boys. As the only female on our family team of six, I do try to maintain a sense of calm between each visit to the emergency room or ice pack placed on each throbbing boo-boo (usually created by a brother—which one I still can't determine) but sometimes staying calm in the midst of an injury is still an incredible challenge for me. Maybe you haven't quite been faced with this situation just yet and aren't even sure how you would react. Just know that when it happens, just be prepared for your heart (the one outside your body) to ache when you experience each and every single bump, bruise, scrape, cut or break.

Just when you think your worries will soon disappear as your twins move into their next stage of development, those worries don't go away they just change and evolve with every age and stage. Here's a perfect example. For our twin boys' 10th birthday, it was time to get them mountain bikes since they had outgrown their old bikes and needed bigger ones to ride. It was the day before their 10th birthday and two hours before we were hosting a birthday party at the movies for eight 10-year-olds. Both boys were very excited when we unveiled their presents and immediately got on their bikes to ride like the wind. As my son Nicholas was riding down a hill in our neighborhood he lost control of his bike and flipped over the handlebars and crashed pretty hard. His face hit the pavement so hard that he actually broke his two front teeth and he had scrapes and bruises all over his body. So when he walked into the house spitting out pieces of his teeth and I saw him for the first time, I tried to stay as calm as a mom can be in this situation as I helped him get cleaned up. He was so brave...he didn't even cry when it happened until afterwards when he thought he had ruined James' chance to celebrate their 10th birthday at the movies. Isn't that just like a twin? One hour before their birthday party, my husband took Nick to the dentist to get his teeth temporarily repaired and they were able to make it to the movies just in time to celebrate with friends. Two root canals later and some temporary crowns have made this injury another one for our memory book and a great story for Nick to tell. We can now joke and say that giving them mountain bikes this year was definitely the gift that keeps on giving...especially when he has to get permanent crowns when he's an adult.

So, just in time for summer...this issue is themed around safety and how to keep our kids safe with topics like twin-proofing your backyard; twins and kitchen safety; an injury prevention checklist; important safety information & tips from the National SAFE Kids Organization on swimming safe, biking safe and riding safe, as well as our special Ages & Stages section with our top picks for the best safety products and gear for each age and stage. Pamela Fierro the multiples guide from About.com has also written an interesting article entitled 'Safety in Numbers' and explores the idea that twins and parents tend to feel safer when they are together, but are they?

Be sure to check out our special 'Back to School' section with some great information and articles on what every parent of multiples needs to know when their twins get ready to go to school and other school-themed articles. Included in this section, Dr. John Mascazine has written an informative article entitled 'Be Prepared for the Placement of your Multiples in School' that gives parents tips we all can use. Also in this issue read my in-depth interview with Amy Roloff, from the popular TLC realty show *Little People, Big World*. This dynamic mother of four (including a set of 18-year-old twins) shares her insight with all of us in the article entitled 'Little Person, Big Heart'.

This issue also features all of our regular columns and sections plus much, much more!

We always appreciate your comments and feedback so if you have a comment, letter, story idea and activity to share, or if you have a question for any of our columnists e-mail our staff at reader.responses@twinsmagazine.com and be sure to include a photo of your twins if you would like to be included in an upcoming issue. Have a wonderful summer, stay safe and enjoy every single moment you share with your kids!

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa D. Reed, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief



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Twins in the News...



Separation of Twins in School Debate Heats Up in the U.S.

Actor & single father of twins, Jon Avner fights back. Around the nation, parents of twins and higher-order multiples are faced with mandatory separation when their twins enter school. When the Levittown, New York school district told actor and single dad Jon Avner that his twins would be separated starting in Kindergarten, he fought back. His twins had no problems sharing a classroom for two years in pre-school and he believes it

is best for his children to stay together. Jon explained how he researched his rights as a parent; "I had a meeting with their principal last year and handed her a letter and doctor's note recommending non-separation for my twins. I also gave her information compiled from www.twinslaw.com and www.NOMOTC.org where I became a member." He was also circulating petitions to people in New York to support the New York State Twins Bill. The school allowed Jon's children to be together in Kindergarten, but said that in the future, mandatory separation may become an issue again. "I was told then by the principal that I 'won' and they could be in the same class for Kindergarten but will have to fight after that." He was told by the principal that she will insist on separating them next year and that she has already denied the request from another parent of twins. Avner was scheduled to meet with school district officials in June to discuss his options for keeping his boy/girl twins together in 1st grade and his request was denied by the principal and school district. We will keep you posted on any news regarding his fight for parental rights and what his next steps will be. Four states have already enacted laws regarding parental rights; 14 states already have legislative sponsors; and 10 states are currently seeking sponsors. [For information on your rights as a parent of multiples and to see what your state is currently doing please visit: www.twinslaw.com.](http://www.twinslaw.com)



Call for Photos for a Special TWINS™ Magazine 25th Anniversary Calendar for 2009

We are currently seeking a variety of seasonal pictures of twins for our special 25th Anniversary commemorative calendar that will be out in 2009. We are hoping to get a wide variety of twins of all ages to include in our calendar in numerous seasonal settings. If you want your twins to be included in this special anniversary calendar, please visit our website at www.TwinsMagazine.com/CalendarRelease.html to download a photo release form and send us your photos and form by October 1, 2008. Photos need to be sent to TWINS™ Magazine, 5748-D, South College Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80525. Photos should be labeled with twins' names, ages and city where you live. Any photos sent in will not be returned and will be the property of TWINS™ Magazine. [If you have questions, please call Customer Service at 888-55-TWINS.](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com/CalendarRelease.html)



www.TWINS™ Magazine.com to Launch Redesign of Website



One of the best websites for information and resources on parenting twins and higher-order multiples soon will be getting a face-lift. TWINS™ Magazine's

newly-designed website will still be your favorite place to get all the information you need about parenting multiples but will now offer more enhanced features and easier navigation throughout the site. "We really want www.TwinsMagazine.com to be your one-stop online site for everything you need to know about parenting multiples. We are very excited to be launching this redesign and are confident that our readers will be quite pleased

with all the new features we will be offering," says Christa D. Reed, Publisher. The newly redesigned website will go live this summer. Look for more information coming soon.

Cont'd on Pg. 4

Wisconsin Mothers of Twins Clubs State Organization Launches Research Survey

According to Jana Malkan, 2nd Vice President of the Wisconsin Mothers of Twins Clubs Organization, they are conducting a state-wide survey addressing "Multiples'



Placement in Wisconsin's Classrooms: A Parental Choice?" They are hoping that the survey will help aid Wisconsin in creating legislation allowing parents the choice in placing multiples in classrooms. Kathy Dolan from www.TwinsLaw.com has been working with this group to provide information and research regarding this topic to their organization. They are currently in the data collecting stage of this project, and will post their results after the survey is completed.

Brangelina... Next Set of Celebrities Expecting Twins

By now everyone has probably heard the news that Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are expecting twin daughters. Arguably one of the most famous celebrity couples in the world, they will be adding two more to their bunch with a set of twins. Her due date is August 19 and their new bundles could arrive anytime this summer, although some media outlets had already reported she had delivered her twins in May, which her representatives adamantly denied. Jolie, age 33, and Pitt, 44, currently reside in France with their four children; Maddox, age 6, Pax, age 4, and Zahara, age 3, as well as daughter, Shiloh, who turned 2 at the end of May. They plan to deliver their twins in France. ♡

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STUPID QUESTIONS WE ALWAYS HEAR...



By Melinda Rhodes

Melinda Rhodes lives in Ogden, Utah. She is the mother of fraternal twins, Brayden and Makenzie, born in July 2007.

It never fails. The double stroller comes out and the spectacle begins. You'd think the circus was in town or something. Maybe I'll stop waxing my face and really give them something to gawk at. "Ladies and gentlemen, step right up and see the bearded lady and her big headed twins!" Everyone has to stop me and ask stupid questions. What should be a quick five minute trip to the store, ends up taking 20 minutes. Well I'm tired of suffering the dim-witted questions of total strangers with a smile. Here are the top five most common questions I get when I go out. And the answers I'd really love to give if I wasn't so darn polite!

Q: Oh, look! Are they twins?

A: No Sherlock, I just had them really close together.

Q: What are they?

A: What are you. . .stupid? They are babies of the human variety. A boy and a girl to be precise.

Q: (This question usually follows "What are they?") Are they identical?

A: Do they look identical? Please refer to my previous answer. Twins of opposite sexes are never identical. Duh!

Q: How do you tell them apart?

A: Ummm... I can't. I frequently have to take off their diapers to see which is which.

Q: Did you have them "naturally?"

A: None of your business! But if you must know, they are 100% organic. . .no synthetic materials whatsoever. ♡

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TWO SETS OF TWINS – TWICE AS FUN...

I am the proud mom of two sets of naturally-conceived identical twin boys. I love your magazine and have had good intentions for the past year to send our story in. However, we've had a busy year filled with lots of joy and excitement, not to mention a

bowl of cereal poured on a copy ready to be mailed to you! Our oldest twins, Bradley and Evan, will be five-years-old in June. The babies, Brayden and Ethan, will be one in June. The past year has flown by, and I can't believe we're getting ready to celebrate birthdays. I would like to emphasize the importance of close monitoring with a twin pregnancy. My first twin pregnancy was treated as a routine normal pregnancy with a couple of ultrasounds. Bradley and Evan were born at 33 weeks gestation. We were fortunate that there were no major complications. The boys were kept in the NICU for two weeks, primarily to learn to eat and be able to regulate their body temperature.



When I found out that I was pregnant with twins for a second time, my OB/GYN referred me to a Maternal Fetal Care specialist. An early ultrasound revealed the twins were monochorionic, diamniotic.

The babies were sharing one placenta, which put them at high risk for developing Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion-Syndrome or TTTS. Frequent ultrasounds were necessary as well as P17 (alpha-hydroxy-progesterone) injections. These injections were to relax the uterus and prevent early contractions, which had probably caused the premature birth of our first set of twins. Fortunately, Brayden and Ethan did not develop TTTS and were born healthy at 37 weeks gestation. I encourage anyone pregnant with multiples to request an early ultrasound. It is crucial to find out whether you have one or two placentas. If you only have one, be aware of the risks of TTTS and find a doctor who will watch closely for any signs of it developing.

~ **Jennifer Schoenthal - Via email**

(Editor's note: Want to learn more about TTTS? Check out pages 52 & 53 in this issue or more in-depth information.)

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN!

Hi my name is Patricia Martorana. I live in New Jersey and I'm 35-years-old. My husband, Gregg and I tried to have a baby for over a year. With the help of an infertility clinic in Morristown, I was thrilled to find out we were having twins! My dream of being a mom and having my own little family was coming true. My first trimester went well. However, in the middle of the night at five months gestation, my water broke. At the hospital, we were told that I was contracting and dilating. The specialist talked to us for an hour. He gave our babies a three percent chance of survival and spoke of autism and many

other disabilities, IF they made it. My disbelief turned into determination to have my twins and nothing was going to stop me.



The specialist said we had a

choice to abort...as the babies were not viable. We refused to go along with this idea and I spent the next three and a half months on bed rest in the hospital. Everyday the doctors told us there was nothing they could do. I was not on any medication. My husband, mom & dad, sister, in-laws, and friends supported me. The nurses began to share our hopes. I drank fluids day in and day out as one of the two sacs had lost fluid. I gave birth at 4:40 am on January 2, 2008. My son was born first; his name is Giancarlo and weighed 3 lbs. 14 oz. My daughter, Gabriella weighed 3lbs. 10 oz. I didn't see my precious babies until the following day. I went to the NICU and saw my daughter first. She was born with a collapsed lung and was very sick. Our son had done really well and he came home two weeks after their birth. Gabriella was in the NICU for two months. My babies are now three and half months old now and Giancarlo is 14 lbs. and very healthy and laughs a lot and my sweet Gabriella is 10 lbs. She is off the monitor and the hole in her heart has closed. I thank my husband and family for standing by me. My mom came to the hospital every day and showed me the power of a mother's love that I now have with my children. Thank you St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center doctors, and all of the NICU nurses. My first Mother's Day with our miracle babies was wonderful and a celebration of my dream coming true.

~ **Patricia Martorana - Via email**

ADOPTING TWINS... NEED INFORMATION!

Good morning! While I do not currently subscribe to your magazine, I am sure I will someday, possibly someday soon but before I purchase that subscription I have a question or two. It was not one week ago that my husband and I received our referral for boy/girl twins from South Korea and I have begun to research raising twins that will be older when I bring them home and some of the issues associated with that. I can find nothing out there that gives any information about raising adopted twins nor do I see anything to help ease the transition. I know that we are not the first family to adopt twins and I also know that we will not be the last family to adopt twins, while it is rare it does happen. Does your magazine ever address the issue of adopting twins, fostering twins, etc...as not every twin mother comes to her twins by way of actually giving birth to them herself. It is not that I am not interested in the issues that are prevalent in a twin or super twin pregnancy, or even the issues newborn twins have just at this point I am very concerned about bringing my two bundles of joy home at about a year old and making sure that I am prepared for whatever comes my way. This magazine is not the only spot that I have noticed this shortfall, just it seems this magazine is a great resource for mothers and fathers of twins (and super twins) so therefore a great place to start when you are adopting or fostering twins. I am off to continue to get bits and pieces of information

from all over the place and try to compile it in one helpful place for me. ~ **Sincerely, Carissa Haning**

(Editor's Note: Carissa, you're in luck... our entire September/October 2008 issue will be themed around all the unique parents of multiples which includes adoption, IVF, single parenting topics and much more! We wish you the very best and hope that when your twins arrive you will come back and join our growing family here at TWINS™ Magazine...)

TWO SETS OF TWINS BORN THE SAME DAY —EXACTLY ONE YEAR APART

I'm 26 and have two sets of twins—all born on the same day exactly one year apart! The first set we had was boy/girl twins born January 24, 2001; Desarae and Desmond Bryant. Our second set was born on January 24, 2002; Racquel and Kayla Stephens. Raising them has been a handful. When pregnant the first time and when I found out twins were coming, I headed straight from the hospital and directly to Toys-R-Us to buy seconds of nearly everything for the babies. With every single pain, I rushed to the hospital—pretty soon they knew me so well that when I arrived they'd hand me the gel and the ultrasound bands to put on myself. Ironically, when my water broke, I was eating and had walked over to get a second helping of spaghetti; I felt a little leak but thought nothing of it. Four hours later I started cramping and headed for the hospital—but this time, when it was for real—I forgot my bag and the babies' car seats. The hospital staff teased me, jokingly inquiring if I thought I was in labor again. I calmly replied, "Probably not!" An hour later I was about a centimeter dilated, and I broke down crying, saying, "I'm not ready yet. I don't think I can do it." In less than 12 hours, my daughter and son had arrived. From day one, they've had their own personalities. Desmond cried for an entire 11 months; he wanted to walk before he could crawl; he wanted to conquer the world and take it by force! Desarae, on the other hand was quiet and easy, a lovely little girl, always smiling. Less than four months later, the pregnancy test came back positive! My mind was reeling. Off to the doctor I go, and they had me head directly for the ultrasound room while carrying two babies in two car seats. My heart was racing as I hopped on the table. The tech squirted gel on my stomach, looked at me and then at the twins sitting in their car seats, shook her head and said, "Well, I should call you Noah, because you're bringing them in two-by-two!" I started crying. Oh my gosh, I thought, "Do I really have to go back to the store and get two more of everything? Can they all just share?" My next thoughts were, "I don't have any more room in the car!" On January 23, 2002, I had contractions and went to the hospital, drifted off to sleep and woke up at 7:00 am with one hard contraction and delivered doubles again.

The doctor said afterwards, "Well do you have any other kids?" He was stunned to hear I already had another set of twins! The doctor then asked their ages—and when I said they were born January 24, 2001, he exclaimed, "Do you know what day this is?" I was totally oblivious. "Silly girl," he said, "today is January 24, 2002. You have four kids exactly a year apart!" My first set of twins had just learned how to walk, were still in diapers and still on the bottle. I couldn't imagine how I was going to survive this. I instinctively knew, though, that there was one thing I absolutely had to do: make sure everyone ate at the same time every single day. I gave every baby a nice warm bath and put them to bed on the same schedule. The one-year-

olds slept through the night; but whenever one twin infant woke up and needed to eat, I woke the other and fed her, too. There was no choice—I had to force them onto a schedule. If I hadn't, I would have been sleeping on the kitchen table! Organization was the key. When they turned two and three, I became exhausted but was afraid to go to sleep while they were in their cribs—by this time they had learned how to climb out by crawling up on each other's backs. I had to come up with a Plan B so I went to the car and pulled out all four car seats and hauled them into the house. I put each kid into a car seat, buckled them in and put cartoons on the TV. I then lined up all four toddlers in their seats in front of the couch, grabbed a blanket and laid down on the couch. It was the best sleep I had ever had since they'd been born! I've also learned it takes a lot of time to raise four young kids. Most of all, I've had to learn how to spend quality time with four kids. I've spent time with them individually, and with each set of twins, and with all four at once! I really have no idea what it would feel like to have just one child. In our household, it's as if they are quads—we do everything together, and we're the perfect mother-and-children team. They never let me forget they're individuals, even though each child was born in a set of two. Each of my children has a very distinct personality—and they sure let me know that just because they're twins doesn't mean they like the same things. It was a huge relief when everyone was potty-trained at the same time. We also have one big birthday party every year and I insist when relatives and friends ask that if they should buy four separate (and different) presents each year, I always say, yes! Having two-plus-two so close together has been the best time of my life. I wouldn't trade having singletons instead of twins for a million dollars.... Well, maybe if someone offered me two million!

~ **Michelle Daniel, Atlanta, GA - Via email**

POSSIBLE STORY IDEA FOR TWINS™ MAGAZINE

Hi my name is Wendy Covello. I am a mother of 5-year-old boy/girl twins, Nico & Angelina. They will start school this September 2008. You see my daughter was born with a cleft lip...which the doctors did a phenomenal job fixing, when she was 4 months old. Most people don't know she

had a cleft lip and are shocked when I tell them. When my kids were 2 years old I met another mom of 2-month-old twin girls and

one of her girls had a cleft lip and palette. I never knew anyone with a cleft lip and now I see more children being born with clefts. When I was pregnant I found out that one of my twins had a cleft, but they didn't know if it was just the cleft lip or both the lip & the palette. I was so upset because there was something wrong with one of my babies and I never knew anyone with a cleft. Then I started to think...well it's something that can be fixed...it's not life threatening....Thank God. Sometimes it helps to see or read about someone who has gone through the same experiences as



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Cont'd on Pg. 21



BY REBECCA MOSKWINSKI, M.D., FAAFP

Dr. Moskwinski is a staff physician at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana and is the proud mother of six including twin daughters. She is also the past president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) and is currently serving on the NOMOTC Board of Directors as Board Advisor. Dr. Moskwinski was the editor of the popular book compiled by NOMOTC entitled *Twins to Quints*, which can be found at www.twinstoquints.com.

GET THE FACTS ABOUT GOOD TEETH HEALTH

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

A: Just like adults, babies and children love the sweet taste of fruit juice. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants should drink no juice and older children should have no more than 6 to 12 ounces of 100% juice each day. Fresh fruit is far superior to fruit juice. Eating solid fruit gives not only the benefits of vitamins that fruit juice contains, but also fiber. And consider the time it takes to eat an apple versus downing a cup of apple juice. This can keep your twins occupied in a healthy activity; decrease the amount of calories and the amount of sugar consumed (which contributes to obesity and tooth decay). This is not a problem only for infants and toddlers. It is estimated that nearly one third of children between the ages of 10 and 14 have dental erosion, which can lead to loss of enamel, yellowing of teeth and sensitivity. The major cause of this is increasing consumption of acidic sodas, fruit drinks and sports drinks. The acids in these drinks include phosphoric acid, carbonic acid and citric acid. Acidic foods, such as pickles, lemons and some candies can also contribute to the problem. To help combat this problem, limit your child's consumption of these types of food and drinks and only at mealtime. Bypassing the teeth by using a straw can also help, as it delivers the acidic liquid farther back into the mouth.

Q: Does teething cause a fever? What can I do about the fussiness that comes with teething?

A: The first tooth will usually make its appearance between 5 and 8 months of age. It is a momentous event! Twins do not necessarily cut teeth at the same time. Fraternal twins especially may cut their first tooth at widely different times, sometimes several months apart. Sometimes, as was the case in my identical girls, they will cut the first tooth on the same day!! Teething, unfortunately, can be associated with increased fussiness and crankiness, along with the drooling and chewing on everything. It is enough to make a parent cranky, too! Although parents have reported it, there is actually no proven association between fever and teething. If your baby has a fever, you should first look for other causes, such as a viral infection, before blaming it on teething. Treatments of teething symptoms include oral analgesics, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, and others), cool cloths on the gums, chilled teething rings, and sometimes oral gels. However, the benefit of topical gels has not been proven. And please do not follow the old wives' tale of rubbing whiskey on the gums! I think in the past, perhaps it was the parents who needed the whiskey!



Q: My 26-month-old monozygotic boys behave like monkeys. They are always falling and I am afraid one of them might lose a tooth (or worse!) What should I do if one of them knocks out a tooth?

A: It is important for all parents to know what to do if their child loses a tooth. The chance of saving the tooth depends on how long the tooth remains out of the mouth. First of all, handle the tooth only by the crown and not the root. Handle it as little as possible. Rinse off any dirt quickly, but don't try to scrub or brush off the tooth. Then, re-implant the tooth into the socket as quickly as possible. Keep the tooth in place with finger pressure or by having the child bite on a piece of gauze, depending on the child's age. If it is impossible to re-implant the tooth, the next best thing to do is to put the tooth in some milk, or a commercial preserving product called "Save-A-Tooth" (Smart Practice, Phoenix, AZ). Then, get the child to a pediatric dentist as soon as possible.



Q: It is challenging to bring my twins, who are 24 months old, to visit the doctor together. Now, the doctor told us to start bringing them to see a dentist! They only have baby teeth. When do I really need to start bringing them to see a dentist?

A: The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that all children have their first dental check-up at or near the age of one. However, many family dentists will not see a child until the age of three. While it can be challenging, bringing the twins to the dentist at an early age will give them many advantages. They can receive an evaluation of dental risks (i.e., cavities, crooked teeth) and guidance about dental hygiene, fluoride, diet, dietary habits, and oral habits. In addition, early dental referral can provide a pleasant, nonthreatening introduction to the dentist which will make later visits much easier. All parents should care for their babies' teeth as soon as they start erupting. Cleaning them daily with a soft brush or cloth should be part of your nightly routine. Avoid using fluoride containing toothpaste as the children may swallow it and get too much fluoride, causing a condition called "fluorosis" in which the permanent teeth can have white or brownish discoloration.

Q: We live on a farm. My doctor recommends we give our twins fluoride because we have well water. Do my twins need to have fluoride supplements?

A: As noted above, too much fluoride can discolor the permanent teeth. However, too little fluoride can cause teeth to be more susceptible to cavities. Try to give your doctor an accurate assessment of how much fluoride they are getting. Fluoride supplementation beginning at age 6 months may be needed if using non-fluoridated water, bottled or processed waters, or water from a rural well. Fluoride exposure from toothpaste or fluoridated mouth rinses should also be considered. ♡



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questions in upcoming issues.**



By Michelle LaRowe

Twin-Proofing Your Backyard

If you've ever put your toddling twins to bed in separate cribs, only to come back later and find them fast asleep in the same one, you've become accustomed to how Houdini like your pair can be. With a partner to boost her into unsafe places, dare him to dive off the swing set and tempt each other to walk the line of danger, it's no surprise that with double the fingers and double the toes to track, keeping your twins safe as they play outdoors this summer can be twice the work. So as you prepare to transform your backyard into a summer playground, follow these twin-proofing guidelines to cut back on the hidden hazards in your backyard and make your play zone a safe place to be.

Carefully Inspect Your Playground Equipment

According to the National Program for Playground Safety over 200,000 children per year are injured on playgrounds. Since most of these injuries are a result of falls, be sure that you have a proper shock absorbing surface underneath your play set. 12 inches of sand, mulch or rubber matting will offer your twins the best protection. You'll also want to be sure that your play set is properly anchored to the ground, that surfaces are smooth, that protruding bolts are repaired and that all "S" shaped hooks are fully closed. Check your slide for any sharp edges and be sure that there is a clear exit area for sliders.

Think Twice About Trampolines

If the nearly 250,000 trampoline injuries reported each year (according to the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons) has not convinced you to steer

clear of this backyard accessory, if you opt to purchase a trampoline for your twins, be sure it is a spring-less model that has a full safety enclosure. Since a majority of trampoline injuries occur from children colliding with other jumpers, it's vitally important to continuously supervise your twins at play.

Sandbox Safety

If your sandbox is built directly on the ground, be sure to line it with landscape fabric to prevent weeds from growing up and to facilitate water drainage. You'll also want to fill your sandbox with "sandbox sand." Sold at home improvement stores, sandbox sand is smoother and cleaner than regular sand. You'll also need to invest in a cover to keep pets and rodents (and their droppings!) out. Place a five gallon bucket upside down in your sandbox and properly secure a plastic tarp onto the sandbox. The bucket will prevent water from pooling on the top of the tarp which can be a safety issue for your twins and a breeding ground for bugs.

Landscape Supplies and Equipment

Your twins are naturally curious and won't hesitate to explore. Be sure all power equipment and lawn treatment products are stored and secured in a locked shed.

Decks And Fences

Be sure to measure the space between the railing slots on your deck. If they are wide enough for your twins to trap a limb, utilize safety netting. You'll also want to be sure a hard mounted gate is attached to the top and

bottom of the stairs. Also check all your fences for loose hardware, splinters and missing slats. Be sure pickets are less than five inches apart and that there are no sharp edges for your twins to get caught on.

Outdoor Furniture & Outdoor Outlets

Be sure your outdoor seating is sturdy and safe. Secure garden swings properly to the ground and check to ensure cushions are securely fastened to seating. Replace outdoor outlet covers with childproof outlet covers that your twins can't open.

Pools

Be sure your pool is properly barricaded. Install a fence that is at least four feet tall and be sure that there are no weak areas that your twins can squeeze through. Be sure the gate has a self-locking mechanism that your twins can't open. You may also want to invest in a gate or pool alarm that will alert you if the gate has been opened or if someone falls into the pool. Remove steps and ladders when the pool isn't in use (and keep step stools and ladders away from all fences). Never leave the cover halfway on your pool, as your child could swim under and become stuck. If your patio door leads directly to the pool, lock and alarm it. Inflatable pools should be drained, deflated and stored and secured when not in use.

Koi Ponds

Fish ponds pose a special backyard hazard for children as their shallow depth can give parents, children and caregivers a false sense of security. Be sure pools of water of any depth are properly barricaded to prevent unauthorized access.

BBQ's and Grills

When not in use, store and secure grilling equipment. Propane tanks, matches, lighter fluid and sharp cooking utensils should all be inaccessible to your twins. When in use, never leave the cooking area unsupervised and be sure that the unit is cooled completely before storing away.

Clothing

Require your twins to wear proper footwear and snug fit clothing when playing outdoors. Avoid articles of clothing with drawstrings or accessories that can easily become caught on play equipment.



Establish Clear Boundaries And Rules

Having a list of backyard rules can help guide your twins in safe play. Establish any areas that are off limits, rules for riders on slides, trampolines and other play toys and safety guidelines for using play equipment. While twin-proofing your backyard can help eliminate common safety hazards and create a safer environment for your twins to play in, even the best safety measures do not substitute for parental supervision. ♡

Michelle is the 2004 International Nanny Association Nanny of the Year. A career nanny specializing in caring for twins, Michelle has over a decade of nanny experience. Although she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and a certificate in Pastoral Studies, she enjoys her work as a professional nanny and as a parenting consultant. Michelle is an active member of the nanny community and was the Founder and Past President of Boston Area Nannies. In addition, Michelle has served on the Board of Directors and as past Vice President of the International Nanny Association. Michelle is called on by the media as a "nanny expert" and has appeared on television and has been featured in print. She is the author of the new parenting series Nanny to the Rescue! and the soon to be released Working Moms 411. Michelle and her husband Jeff reside on Cape Cod and are expecting their first child in July 2008.



Source: www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets/poisonous_plants.htm

Family Fare

Summer Selections

By Debra G. Baggett

It's hot outside, so here are two cool summer selections for your family to try. They're always a hit at family gatherings, pot lucks, and BBQs, and sure to please even the pickiest eaters!

Oriental Salad

How many times have you had this salad at a picnic and vowed to get the recipe? Well, here it is. It is simple, goes a long way, and can be easily transformed into a light summer meal by simply adding chicken or shrimp.

SHOPPING LIST

- 1 head of white cabbage
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1 cup frozen peas (thawed)
- 1 bunch of broccoli (chopped)
- 1 bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 oz. sesame seeds
- 2 pkgs ramen noodles (broken into small chunks)
- 2 1/4 oz. sliced almonds
- 1 clove garlic (chopped)
- 4 tbsp butter
- Cooked shrimp or chicken (optional)
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup sesame oil
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar

- 1/4 cup honey
- Salt & pepper

HOW TO PREPARE

In a skillet, toast sesame seeds, ramen noodles, sliced almonds and garlic in butter over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Chop the vegetables. In a medium bowl add the vegetable oil, sesame oil, rice vinegar, and honey – mix with a whisk until combined. Add salt and pepper to taste. In a large bowl combine the toasted mixture, dressing, and chopped vegetables and toss. Add the shrimp or chicken (optional) and toss again.

TIME SAVING TIPS

Take advantage of the grocery stores' conveniences. Use the pre-chopped cabbage. You can also buy pre-cooked chicken and shrimp. This salad will come together in no time. ♡



Fruit-Topped Cream Cup

Desserts have always been a dilemma for me. I discovered this Fruit-Topped Cream Cup and found my solution. It is simple yet elegant. Once you have the cream cups made, you can use virtually any fruit you have on hand.

SHOPPING LIST

- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- 4 flour tortillas (8 inches each)
- Warm water
- Non-stick cooking spray
- 8 oz. reduced-fat cream cheese (softened)
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp low-fat milk
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 1 cup of fresh fruit (blueberries, raspberries, diced peaches, sliced strawberries, etc.)

HOW TO PREPARE

Pre-heat your oven to 350°. In a small bowl combine the brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cut tortillas into 3 1/2 inch circles, two per tortilla. Brush both sides of the circles with warm water. Spray one side with non-stick cooking spray and sprinkle with brown sugar mixture. Press sugar side up into ungreased muffin cups. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool in the pan. Combine the softened cream cheese, sugar, milk and almond extract in a bowl. Mix well. Fill the cooled cups with the cream cheese mixture, top with fruit of your choice. Refrigerate leftovers. ♡





BY TOM

TERWILLIGER

Tom is a former Mr. America, certified NLP Master Practitioner, life strategies and Personal Fitness coach, Motivational Speaker, Author and an identical twin. He owns and operates *Coaching Leadership Excellence* in Denver Colorado where he works one-on-one with his clients to help them obtain their strategic fitness and life goals. Tom is available for seminars and one-on-one and group coaching at 303-404-9241 or Tom@terwilligerfitness.com. Check out Tom's website at: www.InnerGameOfConfidence.com.

“By cleaning up that space between your ears, you can make room for some new and more important stuff like your family and maybe even you!”

Have a question for The Life Coach, Tom Terwilliger? Submit it at: <http://tinyurl.com/282b75>

Clean Out That Overflowing Junk Drawer & Improve Your Life!

We all have one. You know that “junk drawer” in your kitchen that’s overflowing with all sorts of junk you just can’t seem to throw out but will very likely never use again. Well, just like that drawer, many of us hold on to a bunch of energy draining “emotional junk” that we could certainly live without. We tend to store in our already overburdened brain cells the things that we say we should do but don’t, or should have done but didn’t. This often includes unfinished tasks, grudges, regrets, and all the ‘could haves, would haves and should haves’ that hold us back from being in the now.

This kind of mental clutter can keep you trapped in the past and fearful of the future. If, for example, someone had an experience in the past where they lost a lot of money through a bad investment choice that may have caused them some emotional pain and frustration. Now every time a similar investment opportunity presents itself or if a friend or colleague so much as mentions some investment they go on-and-on about how badly it went for them five or ten years earlier. They wouldn’t even dream of risking their money again in the future no matter how good the opportunity looked.

We do this in all areas of our lives; in our relationships, family, work, business and even with ourselves.

By taking the time to clean out that old junk drawer we make room for the new stuff. We also let go of any attachment we may have had to all that crap. After all, do you really need those old reading glasses or that hard as a rock container of glue or even that cork screw you never use? Get rid of it all. You’ve done it before so you already know how good it feels to have that drawer all cleaned out. There’s something satisfying about getting rid of all that crap and freeing up the space. You just feel more organized. But it usually only happens once it’s overflowing and gets stuck when you try to open it.

Our minds are the same way. They can only deal with so much clutter before they overflow and lose it. That’s when we begin to feel overwhelmed, exhausted, and stuck. By cleaning up that space between your ears, you can make room for some new and more important stuff like your family and maybe even you.



HERE’S SOME QUICK TIPS AND EXERCISES FOR DE-CLUTTERING YOUR MIND AND YOUR LIFE:

Answer the following questions, write down your answers, and then draw a line through anything and everything that is either no longer important, no longer relevant, or that you simply have no control over. In essence what you will be doing is making certain tasks “complete”. Another term for this is “psychological completion” or just “completion”.

1. PUTTING UP WITH!

Too often we “put up with” things in our lives that cause us to compromise who we are. Make a list of ten things each that you put up with at home, work, relationships, and any other area of importance. Then create an action plan to get rid of them or communicate your dissatisfaction to whomever necessary instead of continuing to put up with it.

2. UNFINISHED MATTERS!

Make a list of things that are unresolved or unfinished in your life. Do you need to clear the air with anyone? If so, just do it! Life is too short! Did you ever say that you were going to call someone or keep in touch with someone yet have done nothing about it? If your answer is yes, call them or drop them a quick email today. Let go of or complete as many could haves, would haves, should haves, maybes, and ought tos as you can. Write them down then create an action plan for reducing this number!

3. YOUR STANDARDS!

Write down the standards that you know you should be living by. Then circle the standards that you are absolutely committed to living by in your life from this day forward. List five people who you admire the most. Identify their greatest qualities, behaviours and how they lead their life. What standards do they have? What standards could you raise starting today to be more like them, more like who you really are?

I promise you if you take some time to clear the clutter from your mind you will not only feel refreshed and energized but a whole lot more organized as well. ♥

The Quadfather's **BIG-THREE** Summer Safety Concerns



By Mike Poff

Your child's safety should be a year-round plan for everyone and this goes double for those of us

who are charged with loving, shielding and protecting our multi-flocks. With a season like summer, common vigilance must be multiplied as well. Being a very busy and simple fellow, I often break summer safety down into three overlapping areas of enhanced concern: environmental, seasonal equipment and cyber-age communications. You might call them the Quadfather's Big-Three Summer-Safety Concerns.

Environmental concerns in this context have little to do with carbon but do relate to footprints. In summer, the number and scope of areas trod by the troop expands. In these parts the kids are still "off for summer." Action around the home place hits all time seasonal highs. In these parts (the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains) all kind of flora and fauna are present and this is the time of year to beat and clean out the bushes regularly.

Now you may not be as close to nature as we are. Perhaps you are in a cozy little neighborhood, large well-groomed suburban sprawl or proper urban town home. Still cleaning out the hedge, sweeping up the cul-de-sac and picking up in the park are great ways to prepare for your kids safe summer activities.

Make the effort to:

- A. Take out the thorns, briars and poison oak.
- B. Eliminate wasps, yellow jackets, snakes and spiders.
- C. Identify the territory of various vermin (including the human type).
- D. Provide helmets, pads and a ton of personal oversight.

These tips overlap into my concern number two, seasonal equipment. Take time to look over swing-sets where wasps love to live and spoil playtime. Inspect bikes, trikes and battery-propelled vehicles. Check pools, large or small, yours or public. Equipment and chemicals must be monitored and siphon breaks must be functional as well as the Ph also must be right. Small pools with poor or no filtration must be monitored closely for contamination. Do not hesitate to take your own Ph test kit to a public pool. A twice an hour toss of chlorine into a 100K+ gallon pool might keep the bacteria at bay but did it go into the proper area for dispersion? Was it measured properly? Was it needed? Did a test take place first to find out? Many swimmer's ears and over irritated eyes can be soothed by parental attention at public facilities. If someone balks at your testing, simply remind them that this all floats on your tax dollars and these are your kids. Again, nothing replaces personal oversight and supervision but the testing, repairing and final responsibility lies with us. Being hands-on and heads-up over your children's summer playtime and equipment is a duty that we must embrace much more than delegate.

My final summer safety concern comes from the bane of modern parental over-sight over our cyber-age communications. Back in the day (one that seems to grow further back as each year passes) we had a rotary phone, 5-speed bikes and feet. These were our entrée to communication and fun with friends for the summer months. If you are laughing right now well, yes it seems quaint in a way. Still, I wish it were more like those days than these for modern kids of every numbering. The quantity of kids that carry cell phones amazes me and some are even texting and surfing the Internet. Now add *MySpace*, *Facebook*, chat rooms and child predators to easy home and public access because of the Internet and you are left feeling like the little Dutch-boy or girl scrambling over a crumbling pier in typhoon season. Gossip and drama, lies and lewd photos can land just under the break-fast table for our fast fingered and plugged-in modern progeny. We have more on our plates than our parents dreamed of in terms of inlets for influence, some good, some bad and some downright evil. Vigilance over our children's access and exposure to cyber communications may be our greatest area of enhanced oversight for a safe summer at home from school.

This brings up the crux of my little list of overlapping summer safety concerns. Yes, we need to know what is out there in terms of stinging and biting pests. We must eliminate or repair broken toys and potentially hazardous apparatus. Indeed, we have to control and monitor the communications, media influences and access others have to our kids through these both emotionally, spiritually and physically.

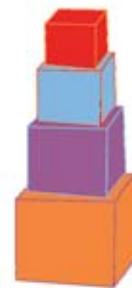
It boils down to this: summer means more time for _____. Either you fill in the blank or they do. Properly embraced, this extra time you have with your kids does not have to be a scary trial or be a tiring, unpleasant toll. Take control, set up a schedule of activities and write yourself into the midst of them wherever possible.

Join and go to your local YMCA, our kids love this place and there are plenty of age appropriate, health building activities for the entire family. Brainstorm with friends and host a group party or group get-a-way. These don't need to be expensive or greatly involved. Think of themes like... bug and bird seeking hikes, Mexican food and piñata picnics, twin swim parties, group fish and frolic outings or look into your community's other planned activities and offerings. Mix it up and spread it around to the moms and dads you know. This empowers even those that cannot be at home as much as they would like. It also allows them to take their turn in chorus with those, they trust, to take the uncertainty out of and capture control of my big-three summer-safety concerns. ♡

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 defining his role as domestic dad, Mike was a news reporter, disc jockey, copywriter & production manager. He is perpetually working on his Master of Theology in his abundant spare time. He and Pam have seven children ranging from 15 down to 19 months. Their quads are now six.



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On Twins & Kitchen Safety



boards closed, covers on the electrical outlets. It wasn't enough. The accident happened when my wife was baking cookies.

Elizabeth and I have twins who began walking well before their first birthday—and immediately walked into trouble, particularly in the kitchen. Because I cook the majority of our meals and my wife bakes frequently, the kitchen is a hub of activity. John and Samantha want to be near us, and being near us in the kitchen puts them in harm's way. We took all the usual precautions covered in baby-safety articles: a latch on the oven door, clips that hold drawers and cup-

Our son, who'd only learned to walk days before, saw the open oven door and rushed it. Before we could react, his tiny hand slapped flat onto the pre-heated surface. He began to scream and to howl. I don't panic easily. I panic spectacularly.

Gathering John up in my arms, I ran for the bathroom, enacting a half-formed plan to get his hand under cold running water. Logically, it would have been both easier and quicker to use the kitchen sink, and not running headlong through the house might have kept him from panicking, too. It certainly would have added less drama to this unfolding trauma. Ah, hindsight. Instead of reacting logically, I grabbed, ran, and generally made a bad situation terrible. Worse, I have no memory of where Sam (John's twin sister) was during any of this. I'd been lying on the living room floor, lifting her above me and tickling her belly, when John screamed in pain. I guess I set her down, ran to the kitchen, etc. I guess. Presumably, she sat on the floor where I'd left her, not crying and not panicking while me (and my wife) did both.

Urgent Care dealt with the burn, while Tylenol handled the lingering pain. I dealt with the guilt, shame, and horror of what had happened by turning John's hand into a bandage-wrapped club—as if extra layers of dressing could undo his first trauma (our first as parents). Before I could trust the kitchen again, changes had to be made. None of them major. All of them significant.

SCRIBBLE ON THIS

During graduate school I once rented an apartment where the bathroom walls had been covered by not wallpaper but contact paper—a gray granite sort of pattern. This paper had been applied over the original plaster—lumpy and crumbling—leaving the walls with a through-the-looking-glass sort of unevenness. Since living in this apartment, I have carried an irrational dislike of contact paper—a dislike now erased by its usefulness in my kitchen. Specifically, after John's injury, I looked for ways to keep small hands busy and safe while keeping them close to me. I found contact paper that doubles as a chalkboard. At the end of my kitchen cupboards and on the far side of the island, I pasted two sheets of this rough black paper. I bought sidewalk chalk—its size perfect for toddler hands and also slightly less likely to snap under pressure—and kept it in a tiny bucket in the nearest cupboard (see below). For less than \$10.00, I kept John and Sam occupied at a safe distance from the stove. We're still working on coloring only on the paper and not on the walls, floor, dog, or each other.

NO LATCHES HERE

No toddler can remain focused upon a single activity for long, and twins are no exception to this rule. The contact paper chalkboard worked as a place to start, but writing on a chalkboard is a single activity that grows stale in isolation. To keep things less monotonous, I emptied out the nearest cupboard—the furthest from the stove—and loaded it with toys. Noisy toys. The cupboard acts as a safe place to store the chalk, but, like a simple cardboard box; its own lure is irresistible. So it's a safe place to store the twins, too. When not coloring with chalk or playing with those noisy toys—the bells and whistles help me keep track of the kids' location even with my back turned—John and Sam often crawl into the cupboard and close the door behind them. The door cracks open occasionally as I cook or wash dishes, mostly to emit a burst of dad-can't-find-us giggles. There's not much storage in my kitchen, and the loss of a cupboard is hard to bear. But there are worse things to lose than cupboard space.

DON'T CROSS THAT LINE

When I work around the home, I always buy more supplies than I need, assuming on some level that the extra material will come in handy later. As John and Sam colored on their chalkboard and played in their cupboard, I

looked for a clear, visual cue to tell them where not to be while I cook. I needed a safety zone around the stove and between the stove and sink—the high-traffic cooking space.

The kitchen floor is a virtually unbroken, seamless expanse of linoleum, and the layout provides no obvious spatial divisions. Chalk lines rub off too easily, while inked lines don't rub off easily enough; colored masking tape leaves glue splotches that must be peeled up. But the blue tape that remained from my last painting project solved this dilemma nicely. As John and Sam watched, I stretched tape across the kitchen, "walling" off the most dangerous spaces and visibly separating them from the safe play region. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, I explained the Blue Line to them, repeatedly talking about cooking and kitchen safety and unwanted trips to the ER—all couched in terms such as "hot, hot" and "no, no." Sam gave me a dubious look (not the first she's ever offered when one of my plans is explained to her). John studiously crinkled his brows, possibly wondering if my absurdity, like my dimples, is genetic. When the chalkboard gets boring and the cupboard isn't interesting, the Blue Line saves me. It took a surprisingly small number of "hot, hot" and "no, no" discussions for remaining outside the Line during meal preparation to become a habit.

Now I just need to give 'the look' or the 'dramatic but silent finger point' to send an errant toddler scuttling back across the line to safety. Generally there's giggling, as it's become a contest to see who can cross the line in the tiniest way. Thus far, John's pinky finger extended just slightly beyond the tape is the record holder. The look and the point, like the giggling and scuttling, are preferable to burns and panic and visits to the hospital.

There are pictures of John with his hand bandaged, and he's smiling in all of them. I smile now, too, as he and Sam help me cook—their help generally causing every kitchen-based activity to take three times longer. But the memory of a tiny hand slapped onto a hot oven door, the memory of a tiny scream, erases my smile still and makes my heart pound—not because of what happened but because of what could have happened. So many things other than a little hand could have touched that oven door.

My kitchen is still a hub of activity, from auto races on the linoleum to epic GI Joe versus Spiderman grudge matches on the table. My kitchen is a safer place than ever before, as John and Sam color with chalk, crawl in and out of their cupboard, and stay safely behind the blue line. ♥



Shane is a freelance writer living in Fernley, Nevada with his wife Elizabeth and twins, John and Sam.

Run-of-the-Mill Safety Stuff

The Oven Door - If your oven is like mine, then the oven latch it already has (for the self-cleaning cycle) cannot be used during normal baking. While there are several varieties of latches available, none of them seem to have an adhesive attachment that can long survive normal wear-and-tear. To keep my latch in place, I used Gorilla Glue. This latch may now be a permanent part of the oven.



Knobs on the Stove - Generally, these slip over the peg on which the temperature control knobs for the stovetop rotate. They snap shut and can't be opened by little hands. But these same little hands can pull the entire apparatus off the stove, knob and cover combined. Use these until something better comes along. Then stop using them.



Drawer & Cupboard Latches - While there are many varieties of latches to hold drawers and cupboard doors shut, all of them are of a kind: one

piece that connects to the wooden frame, another which connects to the door or drawer. Pull on the door/drawer and the latch engages; pull just a little and then reach in to push down on the latch and the latch doesn't engage. This simple safety measure works well to keep toddlers out of the knife drawer or cleanser storage cupboard.



It takes a good amount of finger strength to push down on the latch. Of course, this means that elderly visitors, like my wife's grandparents, are also barred from grabbing a knife or a bottle of Windex.

First Aid Kit - Burns and cuts. These are the likely kitchen injuries, and the smaller, less severe of them can be handled with a bit of disinfectant cream, some kind of covering, and a kiss. Daddy kisses, however, are 27 percent less effective than Mommy kisses.

Vigilance - No latch or line on the floor substitutes for vigilance and good judgment. Use the burners on the back of the stove instead of always using the front. Don't run the TV or music if it means you'll pay less attention to the children. "Accidents happen," John often tells me when we discuss potty training issues. And accidents do happen, but some accidents can be avoided.

Suntans and (Gasp) Sunburns Are 'SO' Yesterday, Mom!

By Wendy Irvine

Back in the day... come summer, we oiled, baked and glistened. None of us dreamed that decades later the world would learn that Steven Spielberg's great white was just a pup — compared to the great yellow we loved to worship called: the sun.

Today, as if moms of multiples don't have enough worries, along comes summer delivering a daily dose of potential skin damage to our darlings. The adult in us knows that we need to pour on the sunscreen. But our inner child screams, "Oh come on... summer is fun! Living outdoors from morning to dinner is what childhood is all about. I don't want to hassle my kids all day long with sun block!" Well, phenomenal news, mommies: the great outdoors is once again a pleasure paired with ample sun block and the latest and greatest in SPF swim wear and clothing.

That's for dorks, you say? Get this: even the crown prince of American couture,

Ralph Lauren himself, is onto something and is now offering a to-drool-for rash guard that any twenty-something would be honored to wear. It's hardly a bargain at \$1500.00, but the point is that rash guards have slipped off the goofball meter and landed front and center on the hip and cool's must wear list. And, along with Ralph, that's exactly what one new mom in Florida also concluded on an outing that would change her life.

"Years ago, I took a short walk with my newborn, Chase, for about fifteen minutes," says Jennifer Clement, owner of www.sunfriendlyproducts.com. "And he came home fried. My husband said, if he can't handle a little bit of sun: good luck with the beach." After that momentous sunburn, Clement and her husband, Ryan, now parents to three kids and both former dot-comers, heeded the calling to build a business SPF-ing the children of our planet.

"It really bothers me when I see a little girl in a bikini," says Clement. "Sure it looks cute, but at what cost?" While Clement and her husband are excited to see parents adhering to safer sun habits, they also know many still need convincing. If you're in the latter's camp, ponder the following:

SO YESTERDAY ~ "A little bit of tan looks healthy", you think, "all kids get darker in the summer!"

GET HIP ~ Any color is damage to the skin say every dermatologist worth their weight in wrinkle cream. Sure, a tan looks "darling" on your kids, but at what price? We all know adults who are visiting the dermo regularly to get "things cut off". Yuck. Sun exposure can lead to melanoma. Any questions?

SO YESTERDAY ~ "I don't want to shell out big bucks for that SPF swim wear," you say.

GET HIP ~ The prices have dropped considerably on quality SPF wear. You no longer need to dole out a whop-



ping fifty dollars on a SPF suit for your kids. Additionally, the more skin you cover with SPF wear, the less sun block to buy — and with the savings, you can book a trip to the Bahamas!

SO YESTERDAY ~ “But I want my children to feel the water and swathed in SPF bathing suits they likely don’t even know they’re in a pool!”

GET HIP ~ “The Solaroo SPF fabric that we stand by is lightweight and dries quickly,” says Clement. “Also you’re not missing places with the sun block which gives parents greater peace of mind.”



SO YESTERDAY ~ “Doctors say babies up to six months old shouldn’t wear sun block so we stay home,” you say.

GET HIP ~ “Our SPF sheets and blankets are ideal for active parents,” says Clement. “Tie one of them around the jogger and when the baby needs protection you’re ready.”

SO YESTERDAY ~ “Well, I’ll dress my kids in the SPF swim wear, but you won’t catch me in that stuff!”

GET HIP ~ let’s revisit: there’s nothing sexy about having weird things cut off at the dermo’s office. And worse, there’s nothing “hot” about panicking that the weird thing has metastasized into a deadly form of cancer. Your children don’t need you to look fashionable; they need you to be healthy.



CLIP & SAVE WORTHY

- The “alert” zone for high sun exposure is between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- A shot glass worth of sun block applied to your child (depending on size) thirty minutes before going in the sun and again after being in the water is a smart rule of thumb.
- Freckles are a sign that some sun damage has already occurred.
- Children with moles should be evaluated by a dermatologist.
- Babies up to six months should stay out of the sun entirely.
- For protection from both UVA and UVB rays, scan your sunscreen label for at least one these products: Titanium dioxide & zinc oxide or avoben-zene.
- Same goes for eyes: the optometrists and ophthalmologists are urging all of us to protect our children’s eyes with quality sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.
- Today’s “no touch” rule applied to camp counselors is resulting in children not getting proper amounts of sun block. Dress your child in SPF clothing, a hat and teach how to apply sun block thoroughly.
- Educating your child is the key to lifelong sun smarts — and, if that doesn’t work: nag!

COOL MOM TIP ~ Want safe color? Don’t miss www.sunless.com. This site is a Mecca for moms seeking a healthy glow. One tantalizing pick: a chocolate scented tanning mousse called Savage Bronze.

Life just got easier for moms of multiples (don’t look so shocked!). SPF bathing suits? Check. UVA/UVB sun block and sunglasses? Check. Chocolate sun mousse? Check. A mom who can breathe easier? Check. Now Generation JAWS can have the great outdoors — and actually let their kids play in it too. Sort of. ♡



Wendy Irvine lives with her husband, five-year-old twin boys and two dogs in Fair Oaks, California and asks, “how do you describe the most difficult, sleep-deprived, crazy yet spectacular years of your life to someone who hasn’t had multiples? Only a twin mom knows. You had to be there. Today when I see a twin mom pushing a side-by-side, I smile broadly. In my book, we’re all sisters in this exhausted, but ecstatic sorority.” Wendy is a freelance writer and can be reached at wirvinemft@calweb.com.

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By Melinda Wentzel

“It’s as if my kids have this warped view of what constitutes adventure and as an added bonus, they possess not one smidgeon of fear.”

Melinda L. Wentzel, aka Planet Mom, is a freelance writer and slice-of-life newspaper columnist whose primary aim is to unearth the vat of hilarity contained within everyday life experiences—especially those related to parenting. She offers those poor souls (who subsist at various stages of lunacy) a sanity cocktail in the form of humorous blurbs about life with kids and families in general. She and her husband reside in Williamsport, PA with their three daughters (age 20 and twins age 7). Log on to www.notesfromplanetmom.com for more information.

The Boo-Boo Quota

What is it with kids and injuries? Is there some glorified quota they have to reach before the age of five or something? Without question, my two accident-prone twin cherries had to have surpassed all reasonable expectations in this department—about a year ago I would surmise.

Simply put, they’re crash-happy hellions with a penchant for danger. Amazingly, there have been no broken bones or stitches—yet, but I’m sure the day will come. I’ve already prepared my “I told you so” speech, to be delivered while en route to the ER. Wow, I’ll bet that’ll be effective. I remember well the little sermon my mother delivered—again and again during my unbridled youth.

Despite having been a wild and wooly skateboarder-tree climber-type myself, I still find the mindset itself utterly baffling. It’s as if my kids have this warped view of what constitutes adventure and as an added bonus, they possess not one smidgeon of fear. None. Zilch. Nada. As a rule, they charge headlong into life (or into hard, abrasive or pointy things), hurling their smallish bodies hither and yon without a care in the world—as if nothing even remotely unpleasant could ever occur. Now there’s some logic.

Currently, it seems their collective mission in life is to defy the Laws of Physics (i.e. to flap their arms and fly off the backs of couches, to budge the massive oak trees in our lawn with their skulls, to round 90-degree frictionless corners in socks at breakneck speeds on linoleum, to blindly collide with one another or with walls in hopes of finding a pleasant equal and opposite reaction, etc.). Stranger still, this quest evidently ranks higher than the desire to avoid pain and suffering. Either that or their recollections of such sensations are completely obliterated immediately following each asinine stunt they pull—like that Men-in-Black memory-erasing-thingy.

Time out, I must round up the resident Evel Knievel-types and tally the boo-boos (just to

satisfy my macabre curiosity). I shall return...please stay tuned....

TWENTY-FIVE! Holy contusions, Batman! Of course that was the combined total of nicks and cuts, bumps and bruises, slivers and hangnails on each wiry little frame. They each had twelve and thirteen respectively, which seems excessive to me—considering they’re only about three feet tall. What is that—like one or two boo-boos every three inches or so?! Yikes! All I can say is...school photo day is fast approaching. I think I shall curtail their stunt loving antics for a spell—at least until the bruises fade to a camera-friendly shade of jaundice-yellow. And what is it we’re supposed to do for these masters of misfortune? We can hold them till the tears dry, remove slivers when they let us, ice goose eggs and fat lips, bandage cuts and blisters and clean (oh, how they adore that!) all sorts of nasty abrasions. We can also magnificently fill the air with indispensable drivel about how to PREVENT such mishaps; but our words often get lost on the way to their tiny cranial cavities. It’s like they’re listening but at the same time sizing-up the stairwell for another go at sliding down on their bellies. Can you spell c-a-r-p-e-t-b-u-r-n? Blarrrrrg! It pains me even to think about it.



Quite honestly, I felt about as purposeful as a piece of driftwood the last time one of the Dynamic Duo crashed and burned. She sat there on the concrete amidst tiny puddles of her tears, holding mammoth-sized ice packs on both knees—a sad little sniffling creature.

“Mom, am I almost done getting boo-boos?” she asked, intently studying my face and hanging on my every word. Naturally I collapsed into a pile of mush right then and there; sucker that I am for those melt-your-heart comments. Alright already, I didn’t actually collapse or even become the least bit oatmealish; but I did do something reasonably intelligent in the face of an extreme parental quandary. I passed the question to my able assistant. It seemed only fair to ensure that he would have an opportunity to meet his quota of unanswerable questions that day. I had already surpassed mine.

You’re welcome, Hon. ♡

you. People come up to me and tell me my kids are cute... and of course I think they are beautiful...so I thought it doesn't hurt to ask if you could do an article on cleft lips and palettes. I heard that Joaquin Phoenix was born with a cleft lip...is that true? As you can tell by their picture... my kids love to get their picture taken. ~ **Sincerely, Wendy Covello, Brick, NJ - Via email.**

(Editor's note: We love hearing from our readers and encourage you to send in your stories and photos of your children and thanks for the story idea, too. Each issue, we ask our readers for their input and feedback. We are providing more opportunities to get many more multiples inside the pages of TWINS™ Magazine so be sure to send them our way. Thank you for your letter and for sending us this photo of your cuties. Wasn't that easy?)

TTTS IN FRATERNAL TWINS?

I was reading the January/February issue of TWINS™ Magazine and felt compelled to write in. I read with interest the box on page 19 called "Very rare case of TTTS in fraternal di-di twins." I am the proud mom of fraternal twin boys born April 2007. Due to previous issues from a prior pregnancy, I was already considered high risk. Add to it that I was expecting twins, thus I saw my doctor VERY frequently. I had many ultrasounds and all seemed well. From the beginning, one seemed slightly larger than the other but nothing to be overly concerned about. Fast forward to April 4th (36 weeks, 3 days) and I was in the hospital delivering my boys. Because of high blood pressure & protein in my urine, my doctor decided to induce me but the boys came on their own the day before I was

to be induced! Delivery was vaginally & without issues except I had some excessive bleeding. The boys seemed great at first – although the weight difference was much more dramatic once they were out. Gage was 6 lbs 10 oz; Tate was 5 lbs 2 oz. Once I was stabilized and we got to spend some time with our sons, my husband and I made the comment at how RED Tate was. It was not long before they were whisking him to the NICU. We were told he had a very high blood volume. They performed a procedure to "dilute" his blood so that it could travel through his veins and, after a week in the NICU, we brought him home. Today he is a healthy 21 lbs and almost 10-months-old. Gage, our "big boy," never had any problems at all and by most standards was a rather large twin. I was curious about all this and began to research what we went through. Based on what I found, it sounded an awful lot like TTTS to me. But I was confused because it said it was almost always identical twins in the same sac, sharing the same placenta. Our guys each had their own sac & their own placenta. They are most definitely fraternal twins – they look NOTHING alike. We were told very early on that they had their own placentas & sacs and that was the "best possible scenario for twins." So, I found it interesting that we still had issues. Of course, I know nothing is guaranteed and I am so amazingly grateful for the wonderful prenatal care I received. I agree with the article whole-heartedly about having frequent ultrasounds. Thankfully my doctor felt the same way, so I was watched very closely. These are our babies we're talking about and as far as I'm concerned, you can't be too diligent. Thanks for a great magazine! ~ **Michelle Montgomery - Via email** ♥

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Safety in Numbers

By Pamela Fierro



One of the most harrowing experiences of my life was driving home from the hospital with my newborn twins in the car. There they were, secured in their infant car seats. We'd carefully chosen these seats to offer the ultimate in safety, but now they'd seem worthless and powerless to protect the tiny, tender bodies they encased. I couldn't bear

to sit in the front seat where I couldn't see my babies, so I sat between them in the back seat of our Toyota Camry while my husband drove – VERY SLOWLY—the 15 miles or so back to our home.

My head swiveled ceaselessly between the two car seats, checking every breath. Each bump and pothole was a menacing jostle. Every other car on the highway was a speeding bullet aimed right at my heart. I wanted to scream at the other drivers. "HEY! Slow down! Can't you see there are baby twins here? I've kept them safe inside me for the last 36 weeks, but now they're HERE! Out in the open! I've got to keep them safe!"

I'm sure everyone feels this same sense of trepidation as they start on the road to parenthood. However, I think I felt particularly overwhelmed by the idea that I had two precious babies to protect from the evils of the big, bad world. How would I do it? Who would I grab for first when evil threatened?

Fast forward ten years to a bright summer day. It was the inauguration of a big milestone in my twins' lives. I was allowing them to ride their bikes to the neighborhood swim club – on their own. It's about a half mile ride, with a paved bike path the whole way and no major streets to cross. I had agreed to this big step of independence – this freedom ride – on one condition: that they'd stay together. I was allowing them to venture out in the big, bad world on their own because there were two of them.

One of a parent's biggest challenges is keeping their child safe, protecting them from the dangers and pitfalls of the world. For parents of twins, this task comes with a mixed blessing. On the one hand, there are two of them to watch out for. On the other hand, there are two of them to watch out for each other. It presents some interesting issues for parents to consider.

With young twins, parents must split their attention between multiple children. They definitely feel on heightened alert, with two young children simultaneously learning to explore their world and test limits. They may need to take some extra measures to ensure their safety. Where a family with singletons may childproof their home, a home with multiples requires "twin-proofing." For example, breakables can't simply be moved to higher ground. They need to be removed completely, out of the reach of a team of toddler twins who might climb the furniture – or each other – to reach greater heights than one child would access on his own.

Parents of twins may find themselves utilizing safety equipment that they'd never have considered for just one child. Gates, play yards and enclosures become standard décor in homes with multiples. Harnesses or tethers can keep multiples from wandering away when families are out and about. Many families find that the safe confines of

a stroller or crib ensures that this equipment enjoys a longer lifespan with multiples than with a singleton.

Yet, after the increased diligence of those early years, older twins present another unique set of challenges. In many ways, the "built-in buddy" relationship of

twins allows them to expand

their horizons – as my girls did on their bike journey to the swim club – with the comforting presence of a partner. For parents, this can provide a level of security, but they must be cautious not to take it for granted. Sometimes multiples are more daring or adventurous as a team, than the individuals ever would be their own. Don't be lulled into a false sense of safety, think-

"One of a parent's biggest challenges is keeping their child safe, protecting them from the dangers and pitfalls of the world. For parents of twins, this task comes with a mixed blessing."

ing that everything will be okay as long as they stick together.

While the safety considerations for multiples may be a bit different, all parents have to remain vigilant about their children, constantly evaluating and re-evaluating situations. Despite our best efforts, unless they live in a bubble, our kids won't escape every ounce of harm. Accidents will happen; heads will get bumped, knees will get scraped and tears will fall. We can only use our best judgment to anticipate and prevent the pitfalls of life, be proactive about instituting safety precautions, set reasonable limits, and pray constantly.

While it seems like only yesterday that we took that terrifying drive home from the hospital, it will only be a few more years before my twins get behind the wheel of a car and learn to drive on their own. Oh, how my heart will pound then! ♥

Pamela Fierro is the Guide to Twins & Multiples at About.com, and the author of several books about pregnancy and parenting multiples including her most recent book entitled, 'Mommy Rescue Guide for Twins, Triplets and More... Lifesaving Techniques and Advice for Surviving Life with Multiples'.



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

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Toddler Twin Feeding Issues

by Shelly Vaziri Flais, M.D., FAAFP



“All done! All done!”

One of your 20-month-old twins is not interested in her pasta tonight. Her twin brother is gobbling it up like a horse. You're thinking, “Hmm, she did eat a lot of chicken nuggets earlier at lunch. But he's still eating the pasta, so she needs to eat more too, right?” Busy parents of twins can make these feeding decisions more easily when armed with the right information about toddler twins' feeding patterns.

After the first birthday most healthy twins can safely transition from breast milk or formula to Vitamin D whole milk. This will be a lot easier on your pocketbook as well as on your daily schedule; no more mixing of powders for all those bottles! Your twins should drink whole milk from 12 months until they turn two years old, since whole milk has a higher fat content than two

percent or skim, which is important for their still-developing brain and spinal cord. Whole milk, and all regular cows' milk is a known poor source of iron, and many kids have been known to “fill up” on milk and have a smaller appetite for nutrient-dense table foods. Keep track of how much milk your toddler twins are drinking each day. Your target maximum of milk is 16-18 ounces a day [definitely never over 24 ounces in a day, which increases the risk of iron-deficiency anemia].

Feeding toddler twins is tough enough—don't make meal-time a “battle.” If one twin is indicating that she is finished with her meal, end her meal. She may say “no,” she may shove the spoon away, she may throw her sippy cup—these are all signs that you should end her meal. Do not be tempted to keep feeding with tactics such as airplane spoons looking for a runway, or dancing spouses behind your head. Don't worry if her twin is still eating! Trust each of your twins' “satiety centers” which tells them that their tummy is full.

Parents of twins always have a twin available for comparison—you need to remind yourself that everyone is an individual. Just because one of your kids happens to be hungry that day, do not feel the need to force-feed the twin who has a normal appetite! All too often we parents don't feel that we're doing a good job if our kids aren't eating three perfect square meals each day, but when you have toddlers, relax. In the long run, you want to avoid recurring power struggles at mealtimes. Don't stress too much over one individual meal at a time; a meal may not have enough vegetables, for example, but the goal is healthful eating over two or three days taken as a whole.

Appropriate portion sizes at mealtime can be surprising to parents. A proper meal is a lot smaller than one may think, especially compared to the overly abundant meals served at restaurants today. A serving of fruit or vegetable is one tablespoon per year of the child's age. A serving of protein [chicken, meats] is about the same size as your child's fist.

When you're feeding toddler twins day in, day out, remember to relax and keep your ‘poker face’ on. If your kids see that they can get a rise out of you, whether it's a positive or negative reaction, they'll try again to get that reaction out of you! Are you still concerned that your kids aren't eating well enough? Ask yourself these

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three questions: 1] are the twins growing appropriately, as measured at their well child checkups? 2] Are they having regular bowel movements, ideally once a day, but at least once every 2-3 days? 3] Do the kids urinate regularly? Most likely you would say yes to these three questions. So here's the bottom line: if your twins are peeing well, pooping well, and growing well, trust that they are eating well enough. Relax at mealtimes, help your twins learn to feed themselves, and continue to offer healthy choices for meals and snacks.

No discussion of feeding would be complete without a reminder to avoid choking hazards: hot dogs, raw baby carrots, nuts, and whole grapes, for example. Make sure you slice these items lengthwise into small pieces so they do not block your child's airway if accidentally inhaled.

You'll notice that your twins drink less milk after their first birthday. This is normal, and happens for three reasons:

- Your twins are eating more solid foods, and are more interested in table foods. They are beginning to form taste preferences, and may prefer the excitement of a new table food to the 'same-old' milk that they always drink. Your twins are also mastering the art of self-feeding. The focus should be placed on their increasing independence, not their total caloric intake.
- Your twins are more active and interested in the world around them. They are working on developing their fine motor skills and examining microscopic pieces of fuzz. They'd rather walk and run now that they've finally learned how! This can all be a lot more fun than eating or drinking!
- Your twins, and all children this age, are starting to slow down their rate of growth. The rate of growth in the first year of life is astounding, and if the child kept that up for a few more years, they would soon be nine feet tall! Since the child is not growing quite so quickly, he simply won't have the desire to eat as much as he did a couple months earlier.

I encourage you to begin having mealtimes as a family, even when your twins are toddlers! To simplify our lives, we often feed our young twins earlier in the evening, and the grownups eat later on. And let's face it, some days can be crazy and you have to do what it takes to survive the week! However, a family meal at least twice a week will show your twins how the rest of the world eats a meal. Your toddler twins learn a lot by mimicking. It may seem like more work initially, but you'll see that the twins will learn a lot from sitting with their families at mealtimes.

Your twins find you more fascinating than you would ever imagine. Family meals can teach your twins how to enjoy mealtimes and about the social interaction of the experience. I can hear you laughing from here at the idea of a peaceful family meal with toddler twins—I didn't say that it would be a quiet meal! But your toddler twins can slowly learn how they are supposed to behave at the table. And now that you've given special consideration to toddler twin feeding issues, you can put away the unwanted pasta and go play with your twins with confidence in your parenting skills! ♥



Dr. Shelly Vaziri Flais is a board-certified pediatrician raising four children [a 6-year-old boy, 4-year-old identical twin boys, and a 2-year-old daughter] along with her wonderful husband in the Chicago suburbs. Helping other families with young twins care for their children is a culmination of both her professional and personal lives; she is working on a book with advice on raising twins from the perspective of a pediatrician mom of twins. She is currently taking a sabbatical from clinical practice to learn from her greatest teachers yet—her four kids!



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INFANTS

TODDLERS &



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Protective Eyewear

Sunglasses by www.sunfriendlyproducts.com. Children's protective eyewear...They float! Available in a variety of colors and sized infant (0-2 years) & kid (ages 2-5), these Australian designed sunglasses are fully adjustable due to a soft neoprene band & tough polycarbonate frame. Clinically approved to block out 100 percent UVA and UVB rays. Due to the band design, no arms will snap off like traditional sunglasses. These frames stay put while skiing, snowmobiling, sledding, or playing at the beach!



Dr. Bloom's Chewable Jewels Original 'Teething Jewelry'

Invented by a dentist and aunt of twins, Dr. Helen Bloom Smith gave her twin nephews a prototype of these teething bracelets and they were actually wrestling over this product developed just for them. Co-founder and mother of twins, Joy Bloom Wright started the company with her sister because they found a void in the market and they wanted something that mothers could wear that

was made of a very safe material! The material of all of their jewels is made of FDA approved food-grade silicone and FDA colorings. They are non-toxic, lead-free, dishwasher-safe, and are the perfect thickness for your teething babies. They are a unique line of safe teething jewelry that includes bracelets, necklaces and key chain accessories. Products come in various colors and package options. www.chewablejewels.com



Who's Shoe ID

The Who's Shoes ID helps reunite parents and caretakers with their children as quickly as possible. The Who's Shoes ID easily and discreetly attaches to all types of shoes, sandals, belts, and swimsuits, and contains emergency information to quickly reunite a lost or injured child with a caregiver. These are great when traveling on vacation or even daily outings. These kits include two ID bands, photo ID card for parents to carry, DNA collection instructions and travel safety tips. Who's Shoes is endorsed by several missing children's groups, including the national Klaas Kids Foundation and the Laura Recovery Center. **Who's Shoes ID cost \$7.99**. For more info or to obtain kits, visit www.whosshoesid.com or call **713-301-5494**.

Skinvestment Boo Boo Buddy Cold Pack

This reusable, non-toxic, flexible when frozen cold pack make any ow-wee feel better fast! The gel formula cold packs have a smooth outer material that stays soft and flexible at freezing. Choose from a variety of fun shapes and animals. Natural first aid pain relief for 30 minutes and numbs pain quickly and safely and is also hypo-allergenic. **\$4.49**.



Product Picks

PRE-SCHOOLERS

Arm's Reach® Co-Sleeper® Bassinet & Playard

SPECIAL SAFETY FEATURES EXCLUSIVE OF THE PRODUCT:

- The only patented co-sleeping product on the market that offers an exclusive method for attaching the babies sleep space securely to the side of the parent's bed. It has all the benefits of co-sleeping but none of the dangers of bed-sharing.
- Special security straps attach the mattress and sheet securely to the playard or bassinet floor preventing mattress shift and possible entrapment.
- Safety locking upper and lower arms.
- Handicapped and injured individuals will find that when used as a playard the adjustable side can be lowered (and then properly repositioned before use) to easily and safely access a child or infant in the playard.



Child Personal Safety Alarm

Teddy Bear Child Locator --Have you ever been on a shopping trip with your twins, and you take a look at an item for just a second, then look back to see that your wandering toddlers have vanished?



The Teddy Bear Child Locator is a child personal safety alarm that beeps where your child is located. This revolutionary device uses a small key chain transmitter and a teddy bear-shaped child locator receiver (which mounts easily to child's shoe or belt.) Appropriate safety device for children ages 1-7. **\$29.99 each.** www.mypreciouskid.com/child-locator.html

SCHOOL AGE

The Guardians: Safety Game

The Safety Game is an innovative board game that teaches children safety skills using an entertaining and motivational format. Designed for children ages 4 to 10, the Safety Game is played in a family or community setting. The game experience makes learning measurable, motivational, and most of all - FUN! **Cost is \$19.95.**



KiddyGuard™ Disappearing Gate

When your twins start crawling and toddling around in separate directions, this gate is a must-have because it is 'no pushover'--this gate is durable and safe. It is made of strong, polyester laminated mesh, which reduces the risk of injuries from pounding and collisions. The cost for the gate with the doorway frame and hardware included is **\$109.95** and is available at: www.twinsmagazine.com or by calling **1-888-55-TWINS**.



SWIM SAFE... BIKE SAFE... RIDE SAFE...

Swim Safe...

- Home swimming pools are the most common site for a drowning to occur for a child between the ages 1 to 4 years.
- According to a national study of drowning-related incidents involving children, a parent or caregiver claimed to be supervising the child in nearly nine out of 10 child drowning-related deaths.
- In the summer, between May and August, drowning deaths among children increase 89 percent over the rest of the year.
- Approximately 75 percent of pool submersion deaths and 60 percent of pool submersion injuries occur at a home.

Drowning & Water-Related Safety

Each year, more than 830 children ages 14 and under die as a result of unintentional drowning.

THE FACTS

- Four-sided isolation fencing around home pools could prevent 50 to 90 percent of childhood drownings and near-drownings. When used properly, door alarms, pool alarms and automatic pool covers, add extra protection.
- From 1999 to 2003, it is estimated that 85 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a personal flotation device (PFD). In 2003, 62 percent of children ages 14 and under who drowned in reported recreational boating accidents were not wearing PFDs or life jackets.
- Educational efforts focused on PFDs and safe boating practices are effective in increasing PFD usage.

Bike Safe...

THE FACTS

- Each year, approximately 140 children are killed as bicyclists.
- Children sustain more than 275,000 nonfatal bicycle injuries each year.
- Nearly 690 children are injured daily due to bicycle-related crashes.

- A total of 251,366 total child bicyclist injuries were recorded in 2005.
- An estimated 14,000 youth bicyclists were injured involving a motor vehicle in 2005.
- More than 70 percent of children ages 5 to 14 ride a bicycle regularly.
- National estimates report that bicycle helmet use among child bicyclists ranges from 15 percent to 25 percent.
- Apart from the automobile, bicycles are tied to more childhood injuries than any other consumer product.



THIS SUMMER

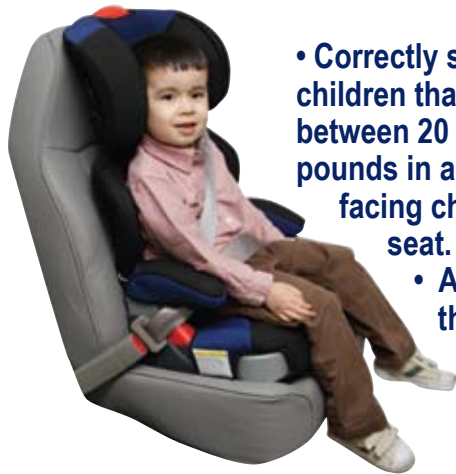
Get the facts on keeping your twins
SAFE this summer from the
National **SAFE KIDS** Organization...

www.safekids.org



- Ensure that every occupant is properly restrained for every ride.
- Always follow manufacturer's instructions.

• Infants should ride in rear-facing child safety seats as long as possible (a minimum of 12 months old and 20 pounds).



• Correctly secure children that weigh between 20 and 40 pounds in a forward facing child safety seat.

- Always use the safety seat tether for optimal protection.



• Correctly secure children over 40 pounds in a booster seat or other appropriate child restraint until the adult lap and shoulder safety belts fit correctly (approximately 4'9" and 80-100 pounds, usually between 8 and 12 years of age).

Ride Safe...

THE FACTS

- Child safety seats reduce fatal injury in passenger cars by 71 percent for infants less than 1 year old and by 54 percent for toddlers 1 to 4 years of age. For children 4 to 7 years of age, booster seats have shown to reduce injury risk by 59 percent compared to safety belts alone.
- Among children under 5 years of age, 451 lives were saved in 2004 due to child restraint use. Of these 451 lives saved, the use of child safety seats was responsible for 413 saved lives and the use of safety belts saved 38 lives.
- An estimated 1,700 children's lives were saved between 1996 and 2002 solely because they were seated in a back seat.
- An estimated 81 percent of children ages 8-15 use a safety belt, and only 68 percent of all occupants use a safety belt in the back seat.



REMINDERS

- Return the product registration card provided for all new child safety seats to the manufacturer to ensure you will be notified of any recalls.
- Check www.recalls.gov to inquire about any recalls or safety notices on child safety seats.
- Avoid purchasing safety seats from yard sales, flea markets and second hand stores or when there is no known history of the seat.

Please see usa.safekids.org for references.
Last reviewed 9/07.

First Aid for Common Injuries

Regardless of how safety-conscious we are, everyone suffers that occasional boo-boo. Children, while active and playing outdoors can be particularly susceptible to such incidents. Minor wounds, such as cuts, scrapes, lacerations, and blisters, can be treated at home following these first aid procedures. Keep in mind that any wound that continues to bleed becomes red, swollen, painful, or hot should be seen by a nurse or doctor.

INJURY	TREATMENT
<p>CUTS Cuts are rips or tears in the skin, caused by a sharp object or even by a piece of paper.</p>	<p>If the cut is bleeding, apply pressure until it stops. Rinse with water and clean with soap or an antiseptic solution. Apply an adhesive bandage. Change the bandage daily until the cut heals. Estimated healing time: 7-14 days.</p>
<p>SCRAPES AND ABRASIONS Scrapes and abrasions occur when the skin is rubbed against a hard surface. The skin is slightly damaged and small blood vessels are broken. The large surface areas are easily contaminated by dirt and germs.</p>	<p>If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure until it stops. Rinse with water and clean with an antiseptic solution to remove dirt and foreign objects. Apply antibiotic ointment; cover with adhesive bandage daily until the cut heals. Estimated healing time: 7-14 days.</p>
<p>BLISTERS Blisters can be caused by excessive rubbing of exposed skin, such as when a shoe rubs against a foot. Blisters also can be caused by a burn or sunburn.</p>	<p>Do not break or pop the blister. Cover with a protective, absorbent cushion, such as a bandage, in order to minimize re-injury. Change the bandage daily. Estimated healing time: 5-10 days.</p>
<p>SPLINTERS Splinters are thin pieces of wood, glass, or metal objects that lodge under the flesh.</p>	<p>Remove with sterilized tweezers. If necessary, gently loosen skin over end of splinter with a sterilized needle. Lift splinter end with needle, remove with tweezers. Clean with water and soap; cover with adhesive bandage.</p>
<p>BRUISES AND BLACK EYES These are injuries to the skin usually from a blow or fall that breaks small vessels under the skin and causes discoloration without breaking the skin surface.</p>	<p>Apply ice pack or cold compress about 10 minutes to reduce swelling and pain. If a black eye is accompanied by visual disturbance or a bruise does not fade or disappear in 10 to 14 days, seek medical attention.</p>
<p>INSECT BITES AND STINGS These wounds to the skin are caused by mosquitoes, bees, fleas and other insects.</p>	<p>Need to clean with cold water and soap. Remove any stinger using a gentle scraping motion with a fingernail or tweezers (do not squeeze). Apply ice or a cold compress. If there is an allergic reaction,*seek medical attention.</p>
<p>LACERATIONS Lacerations are deeper than cuts and are a more serious injury to the skin. They can be caused by contact with a sharp object such as a nail, a rock, or glass.</p> <p>*Symptoms of allergic reaction to an insect sting/bite include: swelling of the eyes, lips, and tongue; wheezing/coughing; dizziness; stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting; breathing difficulty; loss of consciousness; and hives. Seek medical help immediately.</p>	<p>If the laceration is bleeding, apply pressure until it stops. If the bleeding continues or tissue is exposed, seek medical attention. When the bleeding stops, rinse with water and clean with soap or an antiseptic solution. Apply a butterfly closure (a bandage that draws the two sides of a laceration together) to close the wound. Apply antibiotic ointment and cover with an adhesive bandage. Change the bandage when pad is saturated, or twice daily, until healed. Remove butterfly closure when wound is healed. Estimated healing time: 7-14 days.</p>

Riding the school bus can be a new and exciting experience for many children, and if your twins are heading off to school this fall, you should know some important safety tips when riding that big yellow bus. In most cases, it's the first time your twins have traveled on their own, away from the watchful eyes of their parents. That's good because it helps your twins gain a sense of independence as they learn to act safely and responsibly. To make their trip as safe as possible, read more about school-bus safety- and teach your children, too.

School Buses are Safer Than Your Car

- School buses are an extremely safe form of transportation, about 30 times safer than passenger cars. However, accidents do happen. According to a 2006 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the majority of accidents occur outside the bus, where children can be struck by the bus or motorists illegally passing the bus.

The Danger Zone - All school buses are surrounded by a ten-foot area known as the Danger Zone. In this area, it can be difficult for the driver to see anything, especially small children. The most dangerous parts of the Danger Zone are immediately in front of the bus and from in front of the rear wheels back to the rear of the bus. Multiple side-view and crossover mirrors, flat-nosed buses and crossing control arms all help increase the driver's field of vision and add to the safety of the children. Crossing-control arms are 6-foot gates, attached to the front of the bus, that are designed to keep children far enough in front of the bus for them to be seen by the driver while they cross the street. The most effective safety measure, however, is for you to teach your twins how to avoid the Danger Zone.

Let the Driver Drive - School-bus drivers are trained professionals with a very demanding task. The driver must pay attention to constantly changing traffic conditions, the children on the bus, the children entering and exiting the bus at each bus stop, and the schedule the bus is on. Teach your twins to behave responsibly on the bus to help make the ride safer.

Give Kids a Break! - In your own vehicle, recognize YOUR responsibility when you approach a stopped school bus: Come to a complete stop, watch for children near the road, and don't pass the bus while it's stopped.

Plan for When You're Not There - You or a caregiver should be at the bus stop or at home when your twins get off the bus. If that's not possible, make sure they know exactly what to do- continue straight home,



wait for your call, go to a neighbor's house, or whatever you've arranged for them beforehand. And once again, be sure your twins understand to whom they should and shouldn't talk with when they're on their own.

Teach Your Twins Well - If your twins are new to riding the bus, or if you're not sure they know the safety rules discussed in the article, walk them through the steps. Teach them both how to get to and from the bus stop as well as on and off the bus; also explain what's expected of them as they ride the school bus.

Waiting for the Bus - Have your twins arrive at the bus stop on time and stand well away from the curb. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before boarding and don't crowd your friends getting on or off the bus; board and exit one at a time. Never play or stand in the aisles; find a seat and sit down.

Riding the Bus - Make sure your twins stay in their seats and that they don't stick anything out the windows. Never, ever throw things in the bus and talking quietly with their friends instead of screaming and making noise is much safer. Children need to listen to the bus driver and bus monitor; follow their directions.

Getting On, Off, and Around the Bus - Avoid the Danger Zone, because it's difficult for the driver to see your twins in this area. Take 10 giant steps beyond the front bumper of the bus before they turn to cross the street. This lets the driver maintain eye contact with them while they cross. They also need to look both ways before crossing the street and wait for the driver's signal. They should NEVER cross the street behind the bus and be sure that they keep away from the bus if they drop or forget something. ♡

AFTER THE NICU:

Our Strategy for Parenting Premature Twins

By Gina Bellisario



The day Sofia was discharged from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), Paul and I lingered there for seven hours. It wasn't to await paperwork-- that had been prepared long before the end of her eight-week stay. It wasn't for tips on dispensing multi-vitamins or acid reflux medication, either. The NICU nurses had already shown us how to administer those doses. We were simply torn to leave. Milla, our other twin daughter, was staying behind. She wasn't yet a full-fledged newborn capable of the suck-swallow-breathe coordination necessary to eat. She still needed the team of neonatologists, nurses, and other medical professionals that we all depended on. We had to leave them behind, too. So we lingered for seven hours, saying goodbye until our next visit in less than a day. We returned to the question, "How'd it go?" (Whether the nurses meant our sleepless night or stint as rookie parents, they didn't specify.) "Good," we answered, following it up with a broken sigh because they replied, "Just wait..."

Their knowing smile at Milla's cardio respiratory monitor hinted at her steady progress, a reminder of our impending plunge into parenting multiples. The day Milla was discharged—three weeks later—we didn't linger. We had to get home to bottles, swaddling blankets, enough rattles to engage, and a Pack 'n Play stocked with diapers. We had twins! Though the three week hiatus demanded time split between home and the hospital, it allowed us to plan ahead. Sofia taught us that their schedule would be punctuated by feedings, bathing, and tummy time in between sleep. Moreover, her continued health validated our capability, allowing

our confidence to emerge. We realized we could meet their needs, just as the NICU team had. It was the goal of our teamwork strategy. Teamwork was especially essential at night to maintain our own well being. In the early morning hours, we provided mutual empathy and encouragement—each of us with a baby in arm and bottle in hand. The soft melodies of classical music kept the mood peaceful, highlighted by satiated burps. We did have hiccups in the nighttime routine, however.

Born ten weeks premature, our girls were afflicted with gastro esophageal reflux disease (GERD), which meant spit-up episodes stemming from the inability of their immature stomach muscles to stop food from surging upward. As a result, they ate smaller, more frequent feedings to manage the condition. These portions particularly worked for Milla, as her appetite seemed most affected by the heartburn typical of GERD. We also adjusted our feeding technique to counteract her pain, often pacing or doing controlled squats while cradling her. Though this depleted our lacking energy, the motion comforted Milla and ensured her weight gain. The unconventional feedings caused concern, at first. We wondered why no mention of it was found in infant care guides. But neither were the cautionary tales about respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) we heard from our pediatrician. It was a valid worry, specific to our twins as premature infants ventilated within the first 24 hours of their birth. In order to protect their maturing lungs, we were advised to avoid crowds where our girls might be exposed to the common cold. So in keeping with our strategy's goal, we made adjustments to meet

their needs. Like our past adjustments, we reaped their benefits while combating the consequences. The decision to limit visits and duck large family gatherings was, at best, questioned. But RSV never compromised our girls' health. Our determined strategy was subsequently praised by doctors and nurses, therefore confirming what works (whether or not it's mentioned in print).

We realized infant care guides better served us as a quick reference. I regularly skimmed them for support when my teammate was away during weekdays from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., tailoring suggestions to fit into my two-handed routine. Our goal unchanged, I continued to meet their needs simultaneously. When feeding the girls, I held both bottles as they sat comfortably in designated places. Sofia's spot was in a Boppy pillow beside me while Milla reclined in my lap, which I kept at an upward angle by propping my feet on a kitchen chair. (In the coming months, their high chairs replaced these places when the girls grew too squirmy to stay put.) Once fed and burped, they drifted off to the tune of my voice. A book always within reach, I read a fairy tale with Milla resting on my shoulder and Sofia still in the Boppy, eyes fading as she sucked on a pacifier. Tummy time also had its specific routine. The girls took turns in activities taught to me by the NICU's developmental therapists. Though initially daunting to undertake, these activities became more natural with daily practice. And as the developmental gap between their adjusted and actual age closed—month-by-month—accomplishment replaced insecurity.

No longer did it matter that we lacked medical degrees, seasoned knowledge (truly found through trial and error), or uninterrupted night sleep. We had learned not to entertain any doubts about our skills as caregivers of twins, albeit premature ones. We had become full-fledged parents, pushing ahead with a strategy that satisfied the needs of our twins. There was simply no reason to linger. ♡



Sofia (above) and Milla Bellisario in the early days of their NICU stay.



Gina Bellisario is a freelance writer with a background in English education. She and her husband, a high school English teacher, continue to utilize a team parenting approach with their twin girls, now three years old.



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Little Person, Big Heart...

My interview with Amy Roloff from the popular reaty TV Show on TLC *Little People, Big World*

By Christa D. Reed

Have you ever been told “you can’t do that” or even been asked “how on earth are you ever going to do this?” Amy Roloff has heard this plenty of times... and she has the most amazing attitude about life and how to deal with the greatest of challenges. As a little person and an advocate for little people everywhere, this dynamic and wonderful mother of four (including a set of 18-year-old fraternal twins) has more heart than anyone and has the best outlook on living life to the absolute fullest. Read my interview with Amy Roloff from the popular reaty TV show on TLC called *Little People, Big World* and read her advice on parenting twins...

TWINS: YOU HAD YOUR TWINS FIRST...CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW YOU FELT WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU WERE CARRYING TWINS AS A FIRST TIME MOM?

AMY: Some people would think that I would have felt overwhelmed. I wasn't. I think being a little person has made me overcome a lot in my life. So, when we found out we were having twins, I said to myself, we can definitely do this. I get told all the time by many people that I can't do everything average size people do and that drives me crazy. I always set out to prove them wrong.

So when we were told we were having twins, all kinds of thoughts immediately crossed our minds. Like... will they both be average size? Will they both be little people? How would this work for us? So when other couples are in shock to learn they are expecting twins, we had to prepare and be ready for any medical issues that we might face with our babies. A lot of people thought, how are you going to raise two average size people? After being told most of my life that I may not even be able to have children, I was just so grateful for becoming a mom that everything else didn't matter. I really believe that there was a reason and purpose and it was such a joyous event.

TWINS: DID YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC CONCERNS WHILE YOU WERE CARRYING THEM?

AMY: The biggest concern for me was the potential for medical issues that could come up while pregnant. Because of the fact that I am a little person, I was considered a high risk. I was so grateful I didn't have any medical issues but then I was concerned about any issues the twins may have. Maybe we wouldn't have the typical medical issues or maybe we would, it was just a waiting game until they were born. During pregnancy, an average size person would have maybe one or two ultrasounds. I would constantly have to go in for ultrasounds so they could monitor the twins. Since we did have so many ultrasounds, they gave us an indication of what we were having. By looking at the bone growth, and because one of the babies growth was slowing they could tell if that we would have one baby average size and the other would be a little person.

TWINS: HOW MANY WEEKS GESTATION WERE THEY BORN AND DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY COMPLICATIONS DURING THEIR BIRTH?



THE ROLOFF FAMILY

Back Row (Left to Right): Matt, Amy and Zachary
Front Row (Left to Right): Jeremy, Jacob & Molly

AMY: I delivered the boys via C-section at 34 weeks gestation. I didn't realize this at the time but for a little person to have an epidural it runs a much higher risk because of the makeup of the spine and because the epidural is a lot closer for me. That didn't matter to me and I was just so excited for the birth that I wanted to experience the entire thing. Because it was becoming such a high risk, they performed an amnio to determine whether their lungs were developed enough for the delivery. Jeremy was 5 lbs 3 oz. and Zachary was 4 lbs. 12 oz. and they were in the NICU for two weeks. After having a c-section it was so much better for us to be able to recover and prepare for our two bundles while they were still in the hospital, it really was a blessing in disguise looking back on it now...

TWINS: WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE COULD YOU GIVE NEW PARENTS OF TWINS?

AMY: When you have twins/multiples realizing that each one is their own person is really important. Because our boys are fraternal and completely different, it might have been easier for us because we didn't have those issues of identity and finding differences within the set and because they were so different physically. I would say one piece of advice would be to not treat them as a set that is always together. It is easier on us when they do the same things but they are indeed individuals. I always kept that in my mind that I wanted them to learn how to be their own person. Even though they are the same age, I tried my hardest to see if they could have different friends. Since we live in a small rural area and they attend a smaller, private school there isn't as many people in their school so they did end up having some of the same friends. I really did try to make a point to separate them and wanted them to develop their own friends and activities separate from one another.

TWINS: HOW OLD ARE YOUR TWINS NOW? HOW OLD ARE YOUR OTHER CHILDREN?

AMY: The twins just celebrated their 18th birthday in May and they are now preparing for the next stages in their lives. My daughter Molly will be 15 in September and my youngest, Jacob is age 11. I sometimes think that raising my twins were possibly easier than my singletons because they always had each other to play with and do things together and keep each other company.

TWINS: HAVE YOU NOTICED IF YOUR TWINS HAVE A SPECIAL BOND WITH EACH OTHER AND IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THIS IN YOUR FAMILY?

AMY: They did always know where the other one was... I'm not sure if it's the twin-bond but I know that they do count on each other and they always know that they will be there for each other. They do enjoy hanging out with each other but can also go off and be on their own, doing their own thing. They have such different personalities... sometimes it's like they are not even twins. Zachary is very black-n-white and Jeremy is much more fancy free. For them, this happened early on in age... Jeremy was always more into the physical world, crawling first, walking first, running, jumping, everything physical and since he is average size, it made sense to us. On the other hand, Zachary was always much more into the mental world of observing and reading people and he is so smart... He loves sports and life and being a little person, he has had much more to overcome in his life.



Zachary (left) & Jeremy

TWINS: I RECENTLY SAW AN EPISODE ON YOUR REALTY TV SHOW ON TLC WHERE YOUR TWIN BOYS GOT THEIR DRIVER'S LICENSES. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE FEELING YOU HAD WHEN THEY BOTH DROVE AWAY FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME?

AMY: Since we live on a farm, they have been driving since they were young but driving on the road was quite different. I think the episode you are talking about was the one that showed Jeremy getting his permit for the 1st time. It actually took Zachary three to four times to get his driver's permit. I felt so bad for Zach. Here he was seeing his twin brother pass his test on the first shot and for some reason he just couldn't do it. He was nervous and couldn't relax. They are two different people but when they went to take their actual test if Jeremy passed and Zach didn't, it would have been a crushing blow to Zach. He really needed to accomplish this goal to know that he could do this for himself. I was totally elated when Zachary passed his test and got his license. It was a big milestone for both of them but I think I might have been even more excited for Zachary, knowing that as a little person, driving can bring so much freedom and independence.

TWINS: DISCIPLINE IS ALWAYS AN ISSUE WHEN RAISING TWINS & MORE, HOW DID YOU HANDLE THIS SUBJECT?

AMY: I always tried to make them a part of the solution. I would ask them, what do you think should happen? But I always talked to them to make sure they understood why they were being punished. They may not have always agreed, but we wanted them to understand why they were in trouble so they could think about it and learn something from this. They always knew this is how they needed to behave and if they acted up in public, I would just leave. It's interesting to me that I always get asked the question about being a little person and disciplining our children. How

Cont'd on Pg. 43



Two and Through...



by Cheryl Lage

So here we are...a mere two weeks, and our two kids are off to kindergarten. We've done preschool and Pre-K, yet somehow this seems altogether different. And I'm not talking about the difference between half day and full day. Nor am I gauging the disparity as an academic factor (although by the supplies required and acquired—that is a significant aspect!)

For me, this transition to “real-school” is taking on an intensity right up there with the twin-magnified sleep-deprivation of the first few weeks and the utter chaos and unpredictability of tandem toilet training---to date, the two challenges I cite sans hesitation when asked “What has been the hardest thing about parenting twins?”

Easing my husband's and my process during those thankfully time-blurred, doubly daunting stages has been a mantra my husband aptly

phrased: “Two and through.” Acknowledging that yes, the tough tasks are dually so---times that could actually provide fodder for the oft bandied phrase “Double Trouble.” But as most honest twin parents I think will admit (unless they are in the middle of the first few sleepless weeks or the potentially numerous weeks/months of plural potty training), the windows of twice the wonderment have always more than balanced the scales.

Alas now, “two and through” (rather than providing its former solace and reminder of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel) has taken on an almost tragic aspect. Even with the undeniable hardships of day-to-day life with two same-age siblings (and I won't lie to you, there have been numerous days where but for prayer, wine and the love of a good man, I'd never have made it through), when it comes down to sweet and savory years of babydom, toddlerdom, stay-at-home-with-Mommydom, for all ostensible purposes; sadly, our two are through.

Interestingly enough, our twins feel the dichotomy too in their twinimitable way. One minute, Sarah maturely insists on answering the family phone and making her own sandwich, yet the next moment re-adopts the whiny cadence and referring to herself in the third-person we fought so diligently at age three. Darren wants to tie his shoes, read his own books and talk with friends on the phone; but suddenly in the middle of the highway, he wants to pull over for a “Mommy hug.”

I feel it too, My Sweeties. No doubt after the smiles and hugs of encouragement upon dropping you two off in your respective classes that first day of school, I'll want to pull over for a big Daddy hug. ♡

THEY ALWAYS GROW UP SO FAST...

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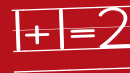
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The author of *Twinspiration: Real-Life Advice from Pregnancy through the First Year* (c. 2006, Taylor Trade Publishing) Cheryl Lage is a writer/editor for The Parent Company family of content sites. She is also the webhost of Twinsights.com, a support site for new and expecting twin parents. Her plural parenting perspectives have been featured in *Pregnancy* and *TWINS* magazines, as well as on *MSN.com*, *Martha Stewart Living Radio* and many more. Cheryl lives in Richmond, Virginia, where she is a full-time, fully fulfilled mom to fraternal twins Darren and Sarah, and happy parenting partner/wife to husband, Scott.





STARTING SCHOOL... ALREADY?! A Stay-At-Home Dad's Perspective...

By SAHD Larkin Campbell

How can it be? How can it be time to start thinking about going back to school again? It must be some mistake. It's maybe some weird, time wormhole thing in the universe. It can't be time yet. I still haven't finished the article in my wife's magazine on "HOW TO GET MY BODY READY FOR SUMMER".

For me, going back to school has not been all that traumatic yet. I have been a full-time stay-at-home-dad for five years now. My fraternal five-year-old twin boys, Colin and Casey, have been in pre-school for over two years. So going back to school meant a new lunch box for their cute little cubbies, and maybe a few new T-shirts from Target.

No sweat, no pressure and nothing to worry about. Until now... The time has come. My heart sputters and my head spins at the word but here it is...KINDERGARTEN.

How can this be? Where did the last five years go? Perhaps I misplaced them. Maybe one or two years slipped behind the TV, like those old Baby Einstein videos. I haven't pulled them out for a while, there is bound to be something besides Goldfish back there.

Except for the occasional acting job, I've been paying very close attention these past years with my little twin bundles. But where did I put years three to five? I remember bits and pieces. I even kept a journal for the good stories I didn't want to forget. Like the time Casey told me he thought their doctor was very engaging. I'm going to miss that stuff. I want those years back. I don't want them back bad enough to have more kids, but I want them back.

Would it be embarrassing if I brought them to their first day of Kindergarten in our little double stroller? They almost fit if they just lift their feet. What happened to those stroller years? The last time I remember using that stroller was at the Wiggles concert a few years back. I even got to meet Jeff (and he looked sooo tired).

Kindergarten seems like such a big world for my little guys. Casey loves baseball, Frisbee and ice cream. Colin likes raspberries, drawing and bubble gum. Those are little boy's things. Not (going to Kindergarten) big boy things. I've spent five years working on letters and numbers and farm animal identification. Now I'm being told that in Kindergarten they will have to learn to make change with coins. Can't I just teach them to use my debit card instead?

I don't want my kids to go to Kindergarten land yet. Can't we just stay in Neverland? All my kid's teachers say my boys are clearly ready for Kindergarten. As you can see, Daddy is clearly not.

We took a tour of their new school recently, and it seemed like a nice place to visit (you know, kind of like Peru). I just don't think I want to send my kids off to Peru either. How will they survive with only a small lunchbox full of snacks and supplies? Peru can be very intimidating to a five-year-old with only a sippy-cup in hand to defend him.

During the tour we saw kids off all ages grades K-5. Now I'm not saying I was intimidated by some of these kids, but one of the bigger kids stared at me and I swear I thought he was going to demand my lunch money. Do they even still take lunch money? I don't know. But I whispered to my wife, "These 5th graders are huge." She quietly reminded me that we were looking at 2nd graders.

I understand all parents have gone through this before. Even cave men had to send their cave boys out into the world at some point. They had real concerns back then, like dinosaurs, tar pits and asteroids, etc. I worry about things like towering 5th graders and real homework. To be honest, I'm more worried about the homework for myself than for my boys. For all these years my boys have truly believed that Daddy knew everything about everything. I fear my day of reckoning will soon be upon me.

Another thing I was told about Kindergarten was that they don't do arts and crafts. They do ART. That sounds good, but what about Art's good buddy CRAFTS? I like crafts. I have them all over our house. I feel Arts without Crafts will be like Hall without Oats. Crafts are stranded at the drive in, alone. Like me, standing at the bus stop as my kids drive away into the arms of this big mean world. It won't be easy, but I will just have to get used to saying the phrase "BACK TO SCHOOL" every year as they grow. I hope it won't be harder than the first day of pre-school, when their teachers were begging me to leave (I kept trying to slip the boys a plastic spoon and have them tunnel their way out...).

I know that my twin boys are happy, healthy and ready to tackle anything the world of Kindergarten can throw at them. I guess us parents will just have to dig deep and be strong. I must let my sons know that just because Daddy is afraid of this new place called Kindergarten, they shouldn't be. But here's a little extra lunch money and a plastic spoon...just in case! ♥

Larkin Campbell is a screenwriter and actor living in Los Angeles with his wife and five-year-old twin boys, Colin and Casey. Larkin has been seen in many television shows including: Scrubs, Las Vegas, 24, Without a Trace, Criminal Minds, and House, to name a few. He has written and produced short films that have been shown at the Malibu and Los Angeles International Short Film Festivals. Being a stay-at-home-dad is Larkin's favorite job and he enjoys coaching his boys T-ball team and helping them become happy young men. He is proud of all parents, especially stay-at-home-dads and is determined to let their voices be heard in today's society.





By John R. Mascazine, Ph.D.

Be Prepared for the Placement of Your Multiples in School



THE PLACEMENT ISSUE—Parents are increasingly concerned about the placement of their multiple-birth children in school. Interestingly, many states have passed laws regarding school placement, and many other states are considering such laws. The laws are a formal way of enforcing sound professional policy. In other words, there would be no need for such laws if school administrators and education professionals would consider the needs of each set of twins or multiples and their educational needs before making a placement decision. This is typically the procedure for other students in certain circumstances, and is routinely done for students with individual social, behavioral, or disability issues. Why then, should it be any different for students who happen to have a same age brother or sister?

EACH CHILD UNIQUE?—Education professionals know that each child, each student, is unique in their educational development and their learning needs. We realize that one approach or one strategy will not adequately address the needs of everyone in our class. Therefore the most effective teachers vary their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of their students. It furthermore stands that a rigid policy will not adequately address the needs of all twins/multiples.

Anyone studying twins and multiples realizes this as well: each set of siblings is unique as a set. Therefore, one policy or placement strategy will not “fit” each set of siblings. Some siblings do very well to work and learn in the same room or within easy sight of each other. Some siblings benefit from time away from their sibling(s) as a way of discovering talents or making new friends. And for some siblings, the placement arrangement will not matter. The point here is:

It doesn't make sense to have a policy that doesn't address the needs of all twins/multiples.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN SHOULD BE IN THE SEPARATE OR IN THE SAME CLASSROOM?

Some Possible Reasons to Separate:

- Very different learning needs
- Very different developmental or cognitive abilities
- Siblings are often more confrontational when together
- Siblings often do not socialize with peers
- One sibling overshadows other sibling(s)

Some Possible Reasons to Keep Together:

- Siblings adapt well to different environmental or social situations
- Siblings make / have their own friends
- Siblings work well whether they are together or apart
- Siblings have similar cognitive ability
- Siblings express an appreciation for each other and are motivated by each other's presence

The only policy should be a flexible policy. A flexible policy realizes the need for different approaches and different placement arrangements. It also places importance on evidence (or data) to make decisions that are most likely to be in the best interest of the children. A flexible policy should include a review and revisit process in the case where a placement decision appears to be counterproductive to the needs and development of the children. Flexibility is needed in our willingness to change placements if the educational needs of the students are not being effectively met. Again, true professionalism requires us to revisit and reverse previous decisions when necessary.

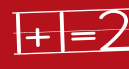
HOW DO I WORK WITH MY SCHOOL TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR MY CHILDREN?

Teachers, administrators, and school personnel don't always have access or knowledge of the current research on twins and multiples. The surest way to support your children and their educational needs is to do your research. Sites such as Curtin University's www.twinsandmultiples.org web site and the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (NOMOTC) website: www.nomotc.org can be invaluable. For many educators, it may be the first time they realized such resources exist. Providing print resources is also recommended. I suggest leaving booklets or books such as NOMOTC's *Placement of Multiple Birth Children in School* or my own *Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn* at your child's school. Then, schedule a time to discuss these materials with your teacher or principal. I find having the materials readily available is often preferable to simply referring someone to a web resource. Discuss the www.twinsandmultiples.org web resources with

your teacher and principal. Print out some of the helpful guides from that site and ask your school to consider discussing that resource at one of their professional in-service events.

Find out if there are other parents of multiples in your school or in your district. Discuss their experiences and take a proactive approach to planning. Emphasize the positive interest of your advocacy. I have found both as a teacher and as a professor, that it's easier to have school officials consider your point of view when you express a positive willingness to seek what is best for everyone. Counter negative comments with information and evidence to support the needs of your children.

As a classroom teacher, I always appreciated ideas from parents who were operating from an attitude of genuine inquiry and support. Approaching a teacher or administrator in such a manner can facilitate an open communication. Such openness can in turn, benefit both sides.



Not all twins react or struggle with the same issues. As the chart to the right demonstrates, some types of twin sibling combinations adapt more easily to the school setting. Therefore, it is necessary and prudent to consider the needs of each set of siblings on the merits of their unique relationship. Making important educational decisions with their unique needs in mind will ease the transition to school.

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF MY TWINS ARE STRUGGLING WITH ISSUES OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT, COMPETITION, OR IDENTITY?—There are numerous ways a parent or teacher may detect whether a child is struggling or bothered by adjustment issues at school. The most obvious sign is when either or both children suddenly dislike attending school. This can also occur if one is ill and must remain at home for several days while the other must attend school alone. Such a change in attitude toward school should be evaluated in terms of its frequency, severity, and duration. The book, *Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn*, contains some survey questions and checklists that may help parents and teachers evaluate some common struggles such as: competition, individual recognition, and identity.

Another indicator of possible placement or competition struggles surface when one sibling shows disdain or resentment for the other. If such behavior is sudden or occurs over several days or weeks, it may be a signal of an issue that is begging for attention from the teacher and parents. Again, such occurrences should be evaluated in terms of how frequently (number of expressions per day) the twin expresses such behaviors, how pronounced the expressed behaviors are, and over what length of time (days or weeks) the expression of behavior occurs.

When dealing with young students, we should allow them to express their thoughts and feelings in various ways beyond direct questions. Permitting a child to draw a picture of how they feel about a particular incident or arrangement can be extremely informative. Role playing a contrived (or actual) situation is another good way children can express their thoughts and emotions. Using puppets and make-believe characters is yet another way to permit children to openly express their ideas.

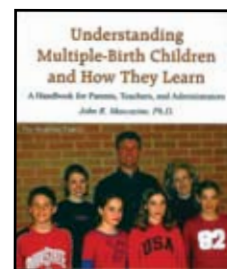
It is also important to assess whether only one or both of the siblings are expressing similar emotions. Sometimes only one will be struggling with a situation or placement, while the other is perfectly content. In such cases, the affected child may for a time need more attention. However, the thoughts and emotions of both siblings (and their non-twin siblings) need to be considered.

Again, no firm rule or standard of advice can be applied successfully to all sets of twins/siblings. Each set is unique and each set is bound to navigate experiences according to their individual and collective talents. Therefore, avoid generalizations when possible and consider the specific issues (or complaints) of the children and deal directly with those issues.

Additional suggestions may be found in Dr. Mascazine's book: 'Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn', which should be available from your local library or twins and multiples support group. For additional information, contact: twineducation@yahoo.com. ❤️



John R. Mascazine, Ph.D. resides and teaches in Columbus, Ohio. He currently teaches in the Education Division at Ohio Dominican University specializing in educational psychology and preparing early, middle, and secondary school science teachers. He's been researching and interviewing twins and multiples since 1994. Dr. Mascazine has presented at various local, national, and international conferences including the International Society of Twin Studies Congresses and the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs Convention. His specialty is understanding the learning strategies and needs of multiples as students.



SOME LEARNING DIFFERENCES AMONG TWIN SIBLINGS

Male DZ and MZ Brothers Frequently:

- Find competition beneficial & motivational
- Enjoy 1:1 competition with sibling
- Usually don't share study time/ study together
- Deal openly with issues of identity and competition
- Deal openly and quickly with emotions

Female DZ and MZ Sisters Frequently:

- Find competition with twin distracting/threatening
- Enjoy competing as a team with sister twin against others
- Usually do share study time/study together
- Deal privately with issues of identity and competition
- Deal reflectively and slowly with emotions

Male – Female Fraternal Siblings Frequently:

- Have an easy time negotiating than other siblings
- Are less competitive with each other
- Adapt/transition to school settings smoothly

HELPFUL REFERENCES FOR EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS:

Ainslie, Ricardo. *The Psychology of Twinship*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1997; Cooper, Carol. *Twins & Multiple Births: the Essential Parenting Guide From Pregnancy to Adulthood*. London: Vermillion, 1997; Gurian, Michael. *Boys and Girls Learn Differently: a Guide for Teachers and Parents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001; Jensen, Eric. *Different Brains, Different Learners: How to Reach the Hard to Reach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin P, 2000; Sandbank, Audrey C. (ED.) *Twin and Triplet Psychology: a Professional Guide to Working with Multiples*. London: Routledge, 1999; Schave Klein, Barbara. *Not All Twins are Alike: Psychological Profiles of Twinship*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.



TIPS FOR TWINS WHEN HEADING BACK TO SCHOOL

By Christina
Baglivi-Tingloff

As a parent of twins, you've had your share of really big milestones from the first time your double bundle slept through the entire night to the day they both were fully potty-trained. Yet if your twins turned five this past year, in just a few weeks you'll be passing the biggest milestone of all—the first day of kindergarten.

Regardless if your twins are identical or fraternal, boys or girls, and tightly bonded or fiercely independent, the first day of school is an exciting time but for many twins, it can be an anxious one, too. "Twins are accustomed to spending a lot of time with each other," explained Susan Heim, author of *Its Twins! Parent-to-Parent Advice from Infancy Through Adolescence*, and the mother of four sons including four-year-old fraternal twin boys. "Since they've always had an instant play mate, they may not be skilled in learning how to make new friends or encouraging other children to play with them." Whether they'll be sharing a classroom or not, Heim says, some twins may need time and a bit of guidance in learning to seek out new friendships. If your twins are socially shy, speak with their teacher prior to the first day of school. "When a teacher is made aware, she'll have more understanding when the child is reluctant at first to play with other children or seems sad and distracted," she added.

Stephanie Faulkner took her five-year-old fraternal twin sons past their new school frequently the summer before they started kindergarten. "We talked it up quite a bit about how they were big boys going to a big kid school. We also had an orientation at the school the week before classes started where they met their teacher, took a bus ride, and toured their school," explained the Hazlet, N.J. mom. Susan Heim suggests even role-playing

"school" with your twins, especially if they've never attended preschool. "Show them how to sit when asked, raise their hand when asked a question, and form a line when leaving the classroom," she said. "Make it a fun game, and they'll look forward to going to kindergarten."

Still, many parents think twins actually have a social advantage over single-born children when it comes to transitioning to kindergarten. "Since Taylor and Jackson are twins, they have this level of confidence that lets them jump right into new situations," noted Heather Hopkins of her five-year-old boy-girl twins. The Scotch Plains, N.J. mom thinks even though her twins will be in separate classrooms this fall, they'll be less scared since they're making the adjustment together. Pamela Damico of Export, PA and mother to six-year-old boy-girl twins, Anna and Anthony, agrees. "Once that first day of school came last year, they both got on the bus and had a good day at school. It was harder for me to see them get on the bus than it was for them," she recalled.

IN THE SAME CLASSROOM

If your twins are sharing the same classroom this fall, it's important for everyone from the students to the teacher to be able to tell them apart. Although her sons look nothing alike, Stephanie Faulkner deliberately dresses her boys in contrasting outfits every day to avoid confusion. "I make sure they have completely



different colored and/or patterned shirts and pants on,” she said. “So if one wears blue jeans, the other wears khaki or black pants.” The idea is to simply make your twins stand out as individuals helping to avoid other classmates from fusing them together. If your identical twins are open to the idea, have them get different haircuts. Different accessories help too, from backpacks and sneakers to hair ribbons and jewelry. And when it’s time to get down to work, ask your twins’ teacher to place them at separate tables in the classroom and pair your twins with a variety of children throughout the day so that they can socially expand their circle of friends. At home, help them to work more independently by giving each separate chores—have one fold laundry while the other sets the table, for instance.

Most teachers, however, understand the dual role of twins. “We were really very lucky to have gotten such a great teacher that took the time to treat them as individuals but also appreciate their twin connection,” noted Pamela Damico, Anna and Anthony’s kindergarten teacher.

IN SEPARATE CLASSROOMS

For those twins heading off to different classrooms, the adjustment can be difficult for tightly bonded twins. One way to help your twins during these last few weeks of summer is to set up a few separate play dates so that your twins can get their social feet wet solo. Or have each twin take turns spending the night at Grandma’s house so he or she can get used to being without a co-twin. “I’ve really not seen twins have difficulty being separated but if I did I would treat the twin like any other child,” said Jodi Fitzgibbons, a veteran kindergarten teacher in Glendale, CA and a fraternal twin herself. “Like with most children I would let her know when she could see her twin, mom, or whomever. I find that if you acknowledge that they miss their twin or mom and then move on to an activity, they’ll transition fairly quickly.” Furthermore, children take their cues from their parents. If you’re feeling anxious about their impending separation, so will your twins. Instead, put a positive spin on everything. Explain that they’ll have twice the new friends and lots to talk about when they meet up at recess, lunch and finally, when school lets out for the day. If they see you excited it’s sure to rub off on them.

HANDLING THE CHAOS

During those first few weeks of school, parents of twins are bombarded with twice the amount of classroom chaos. To keep things organized, don’t forget to color code! Just like when they were babies and you color coded everything from pacifiers and sippy cups to tooth brushes and “blankies,” the system works equally as well for school backpacks and notebooks, pen-

cil boxes and lunch sacks. “If your twins are in different classrooms, it’s more difficult for you to keep track of their assignments, class trips, and teacher requests,” Heim said. “Teach your children to empty their backpacks as soon as they get home to give you any announcements or papers distributed by the teacher.” Heim even suggests keeping a color-coded calendar of events for each child. And what about their nightly homework assignments? Should you let them work together? Fitzgibbons advises parents to let their twins work independently, in separate locations. “I need to see how each child can complete the work on his or her own,” she said. “It’s also very valuable for the parent to see if one child struggles with a certain type of assignment.” Besides, Heim adds, if they sit together at the kitchen table they can easily distract one another or copy from each other. “Even if they have different homework, they tend to interrupt each other with questions and comments about their day,” she said.

Many parents feel that separate work spaces at home are mandatory. “If I don’t separate them, my daughter has more of a tendency to try to answer things for her brother,” said Pamela Damico. For instance, after her son was put into a supplemental reading class at school, he would bring home a special book every night to read out loud with his mom. “I had to explain to my daughter that even though she could listen to the story she was not allowed to read along with us.” Apparently Anna didn’t like that arrangement. “She would try to whisper the words to her brother instead of him figuring them out on his own,” Damico said. Stephanie Faulkner can feel Damico’s pain. Faulkner’s sons used to do their work together but when one son would always try to help the other, she quickly put a stop to it by separating the two during homework time. “I also felt I could do a better job working with them if I only had to work with one son at a time,” she said.

SCHOOL IS NOW IN SESSION

Big changes are coming down the pike. Your twins are growing up fast and learning to do more and more for themselves. Celebrate this big milestone twin style with a double scoop of ice cream! Both you and your twins deserve it.♥

Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 12-year-old fraternal twins 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,” both available from the TWINS Parenting Bookshelf. Christina’s website is www.talk-about-twins.com.



TWINS™ Events Calendar - July/August 2008

JULY

The Triplet Connection 2008 Convention - July 11-13, 2008 Niagara Falls, New York at the Marriott.

Join them at one of the Seven Wonders of the World! This should be one of their largest conventions ever, simply because of the gorgeous surroundings in the great state of New York close to the falls.

www.tripletconnection.org/triplet_conventions

Montreal Twins Festival 2008

July 12 & 13, 2008 - Montreal, Canada. This is a wonderful weekend for twins in the heart of downtown Montreal. Activities are planned all day starting at 11:00am to 9:00pm with a Twins Parade starting at 4:30 pm. There will be \$12,000 in prizes to win throughout the day.

www.hahaha.com/double

National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. Annual Convention

July 20-26, 2008 - Boston Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts. *Catch the Spirit of Boston*, hosted by the Massachusetts Mothers of Twins Association. This annual convention is in its 48th year. Week-long activities include tours, mixers, a sing-a-long, showcase shopping, business meetings, workshops and dynamic keynote speakers. This year's keynote speaker will be Jon Gosselin from the popular realty TLC realty show, *Jon & Kate Plus 8*. For more information visit www.nomotc.org.

AUGUST

2nd Annual Colorado Twins Day Saturday, August 16, 7:30 pm

Denver, Colorado. Colorado Rapids vs. Kansas City Wizards soccer teams. Join the fun at the twins, triplets, quads and families half-time parade! There will be discount tickets offered to all families with multiples. **For more information contact Lauren at 303-727-3538.**

Submit your event information for the TWINS™ Events Calendar to:
twinseditor@TwinsMagazine.com.
Please include "calendar" in the subject line of your e-mail.

Twins Days Festival 2008 August 1-3, 2008 - Twinsburg, Ohio.



The largest festival for twins in the world where over 3,000 sets of twins are hosted annually. It is held the first weekend in August every year. It is a memorable occasion for all those who attend. For more information call: Twins Day Festival Committee: 330-425-3652 or view their website at www.twinsdays.org. ♥



WE WANT YOUR TWINS!
Well... How about just their photos?

Send us seasonal photos of your multiples (for example: patriotic, spring, fall and winter holidays, etc.) for possible inclusion in our 25th Anniversary TWINS™ Calendar...

Photos should be color and at least 4" x 6" in size, and should be accompanied by a signed photo release form that can be downloaded at www.TwinsMagazine.com/CalendarRelease.html. By submitting your photos to TWINS™ Magazine via U.S. Mail or electronically you are releasing your rights to these photos for our use. Please note that we cannot use any professional photographs. On the back of your photos include an address label & phone number with your twins' names and ages along with their twin type (identical or fraternal). Send photographs to: TWINS™ 25th Anniversary Calendar ATTN: Art Director, 5748 South College Avenue, Unit D, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525. All photos sent to TWINS™ Magazine become the property of TWINS™ Magazine and will not be returned.

do we discipline our children when 3/4 of them are much taller than we are? I respond by saying that this life is all our kids know. We are Mom and Dad and they will follow our house rules. This is what they know and

we have never felt that any of our children have seen this as their chance to 'get away with more' because of our size.

TWINS: HOW HAS HAVING A REALITY SHOW ON TLC CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

AMY: Well it's opened many doors for us and has shown the world that little people come in different shapes, sizes, backgrounds, etc. It has been an honor for us to be able to give the world a look into our family life and what it's like to live as a little person. Over the years, we have overcome quite a bit and I believe this is what God gave me. My faith is very important to me and I am grateful to be able to share my life with others. Having a reality TV show has also been one of the hardest things we have ever done. Our home was our secret haven and a place where our family could let loose, hang out and regroup to face the world once again. Since filming began, everyone sees our home and how we live. By having children, I have gained a better sense of what I am doing. Being a mom has brought me to this point so I had to tell myself that I cannot worry about what other people think of me or my home. I just need to continue to keep on doing what I think is right. It's easy to listen to all of the constant feedback and comments (both positive and negative) but once you start getting all that input from everyone else, you can lose your way. It's important for us to stay grounded and to keep it real.

TWINS: WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LIFE-LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED SO FAR FROM PARENTING TWINS AND MORE?

AMY: I would say the biggest life-lesson I have learned so far is to chill out and not to worry so much about keeping the house clean. I am so blessed to have kids and will do my best to be the best mom I can be and this time goes by so fast that I want to build memories that will last a lifetime and not think back with regret because I was spending more time cleaning my house than spending time with my children. Also, early on, I never spoke to the twins or my other children in baby talk and I always just spoke to them as people. I believed that because this was the beginning of how they were hearing words and sounds, I wanted them to hear the correct way the sounds were pronounced.

TWINS: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE READERS OF TWINS™ MAGAZINE?

AMY: Enjoy this time... have fun with it. Try not to get caught up in all the small stuff that won't matter a year from now. It really does go by so fast. Remember when parenting multiples that they are indeed two, three or more people so don't always group them together and keep them in a set. If you have the opportunity, make sure you have time to spend with each one individually and show them how special they are to you. I still have a 5th grader at home and although I am now working full-time, I don't want to let any of it go. I want to keep these memories with me forever. ♥



Amy & Matt Roloff and their four children live on their family farm in Oregon. Amy Roloff is currently on a speaking tour and enjoys talking to young people. She shares her history, her days as a college student, her past and where she is headed in the future. For more information about the Roloff Family visit their website at: www.mattrolloff.com.

**ATTENTION
TWINS™ MAGAZINE
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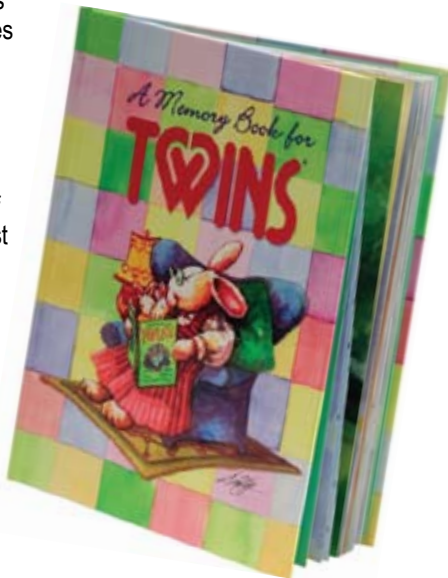
**THIS ISSUE'S
QUESTION:**

**HALLOWEEN
COSTUMES... STORE
BOUGHT VS. HAND-
MADE! WHAT ARE
YOUR FAMILY'S
MOST FAVORITE
HALLOWEEN
COSTUME IDEAS
AND TRADITIONS?**

Send in your response via e-mail to: reader.responses@twinsmagazine.com and don't forget to include a photo of your twins in action! Response can also be mailed to: 5748-D South College Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80525. In order to be included in the upcoming September/October issue of TWINS™ Magazine, responses must be received by July 15, 2008. We hope to hear from you with your responses!

TWINS™ Lifetime Memory Book

TWINS™ Exclusive! This remarkable book captures the special moments in your life and the lives of your twins! Every one of the 56 full-color pages is filled with the gorgeous watercolor illustrations of renowned California artist Jerianne Van Dijk. They await your thoughts, family facts, and photos. Special pages for info from when Mom and Dad were growing up, your babies' wonderful "firsts", and your family trees. You'll love the luscious sherbet colors in this volume.



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Twin Hearts

Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of

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

As days passed and months moved on,
I prayed for two, born safe and strong.

Thrilled by the promise of the joys to-be,
Like two voices joined in ABC's.

Shared sweet kisses on cheeks and lips,
Two toddlers riding atop two hips.

I promise to see you each as one,
Two connected, yet free lives begun.

Both loved completely, for all they are,
Following their own bright star.

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

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

Awed to hold my little ones,
Our lives together have begun.

Blessed with heaven's gift of two,
I forever love the both of you.

~ By Teri Harrison

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 special letter for each twin. 5" x 7" card also available. Available in three colors:

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Everything is ducky with this cute framed print to hang on your twins' doorknob. The 3 1/2" x 5", white, framed print comes with a green double satin ribbon to hang it from a doorknob, door or wall. Packaged in a white toile coordinated gift bag. **SS05001 \$13.95**



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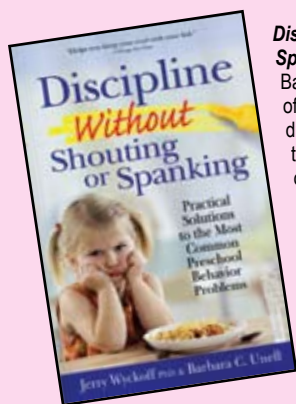
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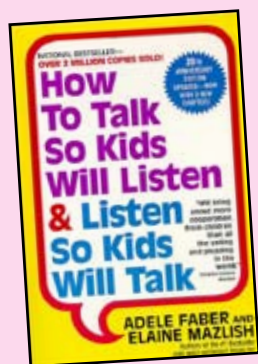
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TWINS™ Parents' Bookshelf

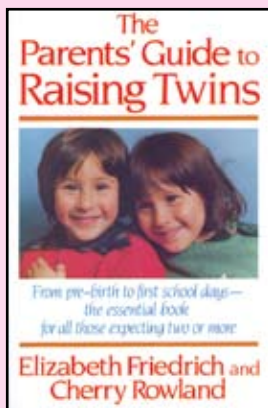


Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking. Jerry Wyckoff, Ph.D.; Barbara C. Unell. Every parent of 1 to 5-year-olds knows children often whine, refuse to eat, throw tantrums. Unell, founder of TWINS™ Magazine and a parent of b/g twins, teamed with Wyckoff to help parents discipline children without damaging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

Nighttime Parenting: How to Get Your Baby and Child to Sleep. William Sears, M.D. 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. \$9.95*

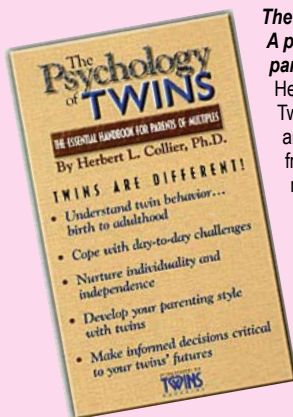
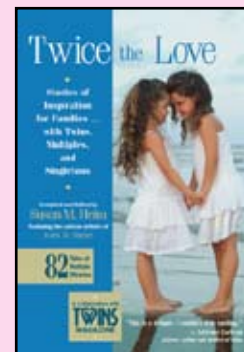


How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk. by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish. A contemporary classic and national bestseller about parent/child communications because it's supportive, friendly, and, above all, effective. It will help you communicate at the level of your children and can help them communicate better with you. *Softbound, 286 pages. \$12.50*



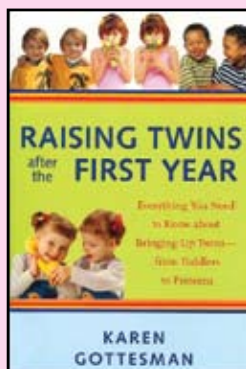
The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins: From pre-birth to first school days—the essential book for those expecting two or more. Elizabeth Friedrich; Cherry Rowland. Authors are mothers of twins, deliver a bounty of useful guidance. Readers tap into a wealth of practical tips and advice from doctors, nurses and dozens of other parents of twins. *Paperback, 304 pages. \$13.95*

Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Parents of Twins and Multiples. Susan M. Heim & TWINS™ Magazine. Cartoons by John M. Byrne
True tales that will have you laughing, crying, always identifying with these families' trials and triumphs. Crazy days with twins, unique challenges faced and overcome, celebrating life's gifts. Endlessly heart-warming and encouraging. A great gift for parents of twins, or for grandparents and relatives. *Paperback, 214 pages. \$13.95*



The Psychology of TWINS: A practical handbook for parents of multiples. Herbert L. Collier, Ph.D. 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.

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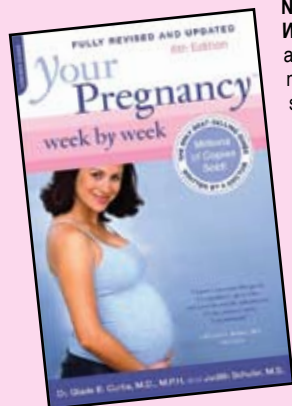
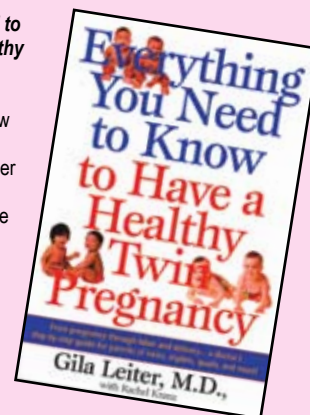
Raising Twins After the First Year: Everything You Need to Know About Bringing Up Twins - From Toddlers to Preteens. Karen Gottesman. From managing potty training to understanding sibling rivalry and mood swings, Gottesman provides useful and comforting information, often from her own experience as a mother. *Paperback, 288 pages. \$15.95.*

The Multiples Manual: Preparing and Caring for Twins or Triplets. Lynn Lorenz. 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. \$13.95*



Everything You Need to Know to Have a Healthy Twin Pregnancy. Gail Leiter, MD and Rachel Kranz. A practicing New York City obstetrician/gynecologist and mother of twins, Dr. Leiter combines her extensive medical expertise with her practical experience in this comprehensive guide.

Starting with conception, Dr. Leiter takes the reader step-by-step through a multiples pregnancy with easy-to-understand illustrations, graphs, charts and text. *Softbound, 330 pages. \$15.95*



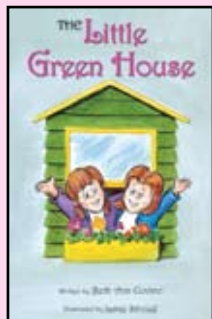
NEW! Your Pregnancy Week-by-Week. Glade B. Curtis, M.D., M.P.H. and Judith Schuler, M.S. The most medically up-to-date, comprehensive pregnancy guide available. Doctors recommend it. Pregnant couples rely on it. And readers love it! The week-by-week format lets you look for changes and compare the details of your pregnancy based on the same weekly schedule your doctor uses. With more than 80 new topics added, this best-selling, completely updated edition covers new trends, products, and safety recommendations. *\$15.95*

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



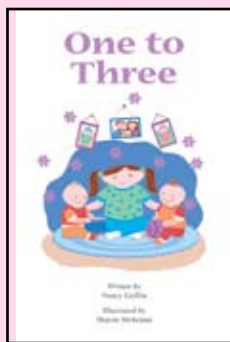
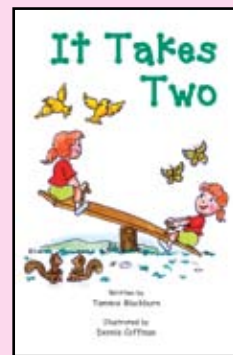
Twin Babies, Twin Babies. by Joan MacNeil and Robin MacNeil. There's a musical quality to the simple words and rhythms of this poem about new parents and the delight they take in their twin babies. "We'll grin and we'll giggle, and watch you both wiggle," they exclaim. Similarly, they take joy in their twins' everyday needs as hungry babies, curious babies, dirty babies, crying babies and sleepy babies. *\$5.95*



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

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

Where are the Twins? Maegann M. Struble. 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. \$5.95*

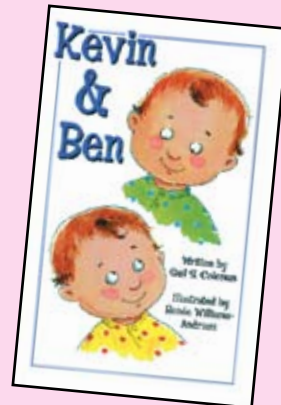


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One Was Not Enough. Lori Menning. Mama tells her 5-year-old twins she had two babies because "one was not enough." *Paperback, 16 pages. \$5.95*

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



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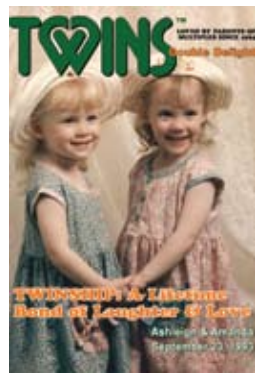
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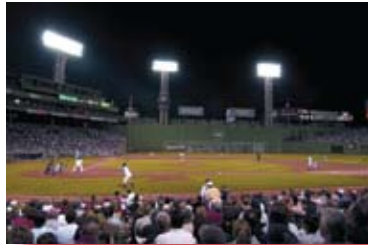
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By Pepsi Cordova, NOMOTC Meeting Planner

CONVENTION. What sort of vision comes to your mind when you hear the word convention? Perhaps it's of a corporate group dressed in suits gathered around talking business? Let's alter the vision by adding parents of multiples to convention. Your vision changes so that now you may envision children running around as children do with their parents closely nearby watching while they chat. Let's fine-tune the vision one more time. This time you are at a National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) annual convention.

What is a NOMOTC convention? The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families of multiple birth children through education, research, and networking. NOMOTC consists of over 26,000 members with over 400 clubs throughout the country. The group is run by volunteers with the exception of the executive secretary. NOMOTC members gather for an annual conference which includes speakers, workshops, socialization and networking, in addition to the general business of the organization. If you have never attended a National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc (NOMOTC) convention, sit back and take a journey with me.



reacquainting with old friends. Join in for a rousing rendition of songs and skits at our infamous sing-a-long following the opening ceremonies on Wednesday evening. Another convention favorite is a themed dance Friday night.

With all this entertainment, you may wonder how much business takes place, but parents of multiples know how to multi-task. The organization's general session is held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings where the business of the organization is conducted. Lunches and afternoons are filled with speakers and workshops. Fans of the TLC television show *Jon & Kate, Plus 8* will be delighted to hear Jon and Kate Gosselin at this year's event. The Gosselins will share their stories and experiences of raising twins and sextuplets with attendees as the convention's keynote speakers at the Friday Luncheon. The 2008 workshops include a range of topics such as learning new cooking techniques, creative writing, event planning and putting together a craft or scrapbook. You can participate in a book club discussion; hear Dr. John Mascalzine speak on Multiples in School; or listen to Dr. Teresa

Bolick address development in twins with autism spectrum disorders.

The Boston convention's finale is a "Star Spangled Ball". The semi-formal evening is a celebration of the organization's newly elected officers, volunteers and members. While you may think the journey ends here, it only ends the voyage for the week. The adventure continues when you share the knowledge you have gained with other parents of multiples. Aside from the individual benefits obtained from attending a NOMOTC conference, club delegates are able to take information home to their local club members who were unable to attend.

The location of convention varies each year and every year the event is hosted by a local club(s) or the state organization in the region. The host for the 48th NOMOTC annual convention in Boston is the Massachusetts Mothers of Twins Association. This convention committee has incorporated a great mixture of the past and present. It is the host group's unique personal touches that make a NOMOTC convention special by adding the flavor of the area. Past year convention sites included San Diego, Orlando, Memphis, Oklahoma City and Albuquerque to name a few. NOMOTC will be in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2009; then returning to Ohio, home of its first convention, to celebrate the 50th anniversary in Toledo in 2010. Delegates at this year's convention in Boston will be considering Chicago, Illinois for the 2011 convention.

While the details can be shared in an article such as this, the atmosphere can only be personally experienced. This unique gathering of parents creates a lifetime of friendships. Each year you attend a convention, the friendships you develop grow stronger. Why not consider experiencing it for yourself? Visit the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. website at www.nomotc.org for the convention schedule, registration information and complete details. "Catch the Spirit." ♥



Everyone's journey may begin differently. For some, it may be at a local twins' club meeting. For others, it may be surfing the Internet landing at www.nomotc.org. And another's journey may begin by reading an article in a magazine such as TWINS™. However the journey begins, attending a NOMOTC Convention is sure to be an expedition you will enjoy.

This year the NOMOTC Convention will be held in Boston, Massachusetts from July 20-27, 2008. Parents of multiples from across the country will gather at the Boston Park Plaza. The theme for this year's convention "Catch the Spirit"

stays true to the history of the area. Attendees will start the week off on Sunday onboard the "Spirit of Boston" for a dinner cruise in the Boston Harbor. Continuing the sightseeing fun on Monday they will tour the Plymouth Plantation to experience colonial living as it was in the 17th century. Tuesday will be spent sightseeing by "DUCK", an authentic, renovated World War II amphibious landing vehicle. Tours scheduled on Wednesday include visits to Fenway Park and the JFK Library. The final tour of the convention will be dinner in Quincy overlooking the Neponset River.

While enjoying the highlights of the city is part of the experience, a NOMOTC National Convention is more than the wonderful attractions to see in the area. A national convention offers a vast variety of events ranging from keynote speakers and workshops to business meetings and luncheons and much more. You may travel unaccompanied to the convention, but you will not feel alone while you are there. Friendships develop the moment you arrive. The week begins with a "getting to know you mixer" called the meet and greet. It's a fun filled evening spent meeting new friends and



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IF PREGNANT

By Lonnie Somers, Founder/Executive Director of the Fetal Hope Foundation

As CEO of the Fetal Hope Foundation, I have gotten unprecedented access to leading research, incredible maternal fetal program surgeons and numerous amazing centers all doing unbelievable work to improve pregnancy outcomes when a distress situation arises. Every year 800,000 pregnancies will develop a fetal distress situation resulting in over 200 losses of our babies on a daily basis. One of the incredible doctors doing something to provide us with hope, especially with Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) is Dr. Ramen Chmait. Dr. Chmait is the director of Fetal Therapy and Minimally Invasive Fetal Surgery at USC-Children's Hospital Los Angeles' Maternal Fetal Health Institute. Dr. Chmait is renowned for being one of the top fetal surgeons in the U.S. Dr. Chmait spoke to us recently about providing some important information regarding multiple pregnancies that we could share with readers of TWINS™ Magazine.

Fetal Hope Foundation (FHF): With the increase in twins and multiple pregnancies, what issues should expectant parents of twins and higher order multiples be aware of?

Dr. Ramen Chmait (RC): The issues that expectant parents of multiples should understand can be categorized into maternal concerns and fetal concerns. Carrying multiples puts the mother at an increased risk for developing diabetes and high blood pressure (preeclampsia) near the end of the pregnancy. These are things that the obstetrician can monitor for closely. The mother is also at an increased risk of requiring a cesarean section. The predominant risks to the babies are related to premature birth. This is of particular concern for high-order multiples. Babies that are born very premature often require specialized treatments. So one thing expectant mothers can do is to make sure that the hospital in which they plan to deliver has the ability to care for very premature babies.

(FHF): What are the different types of multiples, and why is that important?

(RC): Multiples can be classified into three types according to whether the babies share a common placenta or sac. For the sake of simplicity, let us focus on twins. In general, the more the twins have in common, the higher the risk of potential complications. So, the least risky are twins that have their own placentas and sacs. These are called dichorionic (two-placentas) diamniotic (two-sacs). Monochorionic (one-placenta) diamniotic (two-sacs) twins are at increased risk for pregnancy complications. Monochorionic (one-placenta) monoamniotic (one sac) twins share the same placenta and sac and are at the highest risk for pregnancy complications. It is important to note that the majority of monochorionic twins thrive and are born healthy. However, because these types of twins share the same placenta, they can rarely get into trouble. The common placenta

has blood vessels that link the blood supply of each twin together. Because these twins share blood, their lives are linked together. Sometimes there is unbalanced flow of blood from one twin to the other. This is called Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion-Syndrome (TTTS), and can be a life-threatening problem for the twins. Another problem that may occur is that there may be unequal sharing of the common placenta. This can result in poor growth of one twin. This condition is called selective intrauterine growth restriction (SIUGR). In the case of monochorionic monoamniotics in which the twins share the same sac, there is an additional concern that the umbilical cords of the twins can entangle and cause harm to one or both babies. Again, it is important to emphasize that regardless of the type of twins, the majority of the time the babies are born healthy. **(FHF):** What type of prenatal care would be recommended for a twin or higher-order multiple pregnancy?

(RC): Many factors must be taken account when caring for mothers with multiples. One important first step is to determine what type of multiples she is carrying. As mentioned above, patients with monochorionic twins require closer scrutiny of the pregnancy. The chorionicity (e.g. one or two placentas in twins) can be easily ascertained by ultrasound in the first and early second trimester. The later the ultrasound is delayed, the harder it is to accurately classify the pregnancy. Once the pregnancy is categorized, a surveillance plan to monitor the babies can be set up. In general, prenatal care can be provided by the mother's regular obstetrician, with the serial ultrasounds performed by the maternal-fetal medicine specialist.

(FHF): TTTS is a concern in Monochorionic pregnancies. What is TTTS?

(RC): Twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS) results from unequal sharing of blood between twins that have a common placenta. One baby, called the donor, disproportionately sends blood across vascular channels in the placenta to the other baby, called the recipient. Eventually the donor baby does not have enough blood volume to support normal development and growth. Because the kidneys do not receive ample blood supply, little urine is produced, causing low amniotic fluid volume in that sac. Meanwhile the recipient baby receives excessive blood volume and can suffer heart failure. This baby tries to deal with the excessive volume by increasing urination, thereby causing increased amniotic fluid in that sac. Without treatment, TTTS results in as high as a 95 percent mortality rate.

(FHF): Do we know what causes TTTS?

(RC): TTTS is a sporadic condition. This means that there is nothing the mother or father did to cause TTTS. The chance of recurrence of TTTS in a subsequent pregnancy is exceedingly small.

WITH TWINS OR HIGHER-ORDER MULTIPLES

(FHF): Are there risk factors for TTTS that can be identified that would lead a pregnancy to be more closely monitored than another?

(RC): The most important risk factor is monochorionicity (shared placenta). If the twins share the same placenta, then ultrasounds should be performed about every two weeks between 16 and 26 weeks' gestation to monitor for TTTS. TTTS is diagnosed by ultrasound if there is significant amniotic fluid discordance in the sacs. Between ultrasounds, the mother should remain cognizant of the size of her belly. If the womb seems to have enlarged significantly in a short period of time, then it would be advisable to go to the doctor's office to check for TTTS.

(FHF): What do you think has been the greatest advancement with improving TTTS outcomes in the last five or so years?

(RC): There is no doubt that the most important recent advancement in the treatment of TTTS is the laser surgery. Continued refinement of the surgical technique and instruments has resulted in ever improving pregnancy outcomes.

(FHF): TTTS is getting more awareness now, but isn't SIUGR a real concern for monochorionic (shared placenta) pregnancies?

(RC): Absolutely. Selective intrauterine growth restriction (SIUGR) is diagnosed when one monochorionic twin measures less than the 10th percentile. This condition is predominantly due to unequal placental share. Severe cases, in which there is critically abnormal umbilical artery blood flow pattern, is associated with an overall poor prognosis. A multicenter study is being conducted in the United States to determine if laser surgery can improve outcomes in this condition as well. Details of this study can be found at www.usfetus.org/

(FHF): Is there anything else you would like to inform TWINS™ Magazine readers about?

(RC): Yes. It is very important to let expectant parents of multiples know that most of the time everything is going to be okay. As long as appointments are kept and medical advice is followed, the chance of a good outcome is high.

Final Note: The Fetal Hope Foundation is committed to improving the outcomes of these situations through education, awareness, direct support and research support. Always feel free to contact us at info@fetalhope.org or go to www.FetalHope.org for more information.

If you have pregnancy or other health questions about your pregnancy, children or your health, please email me your questions at: lonnie@fetalhope.org and your question might be published. ❤️



Lonnie Somers, Chairman, CEO & Founder: Mr. Somers and his wife, Michelle, founded the TTTS Race for Hope and the Fetal Hope Foundation based on their own experience with TTTS that nearly took their daughters' lives. Having a passion for running and being a marathoner as well, Mr. Somers organized and developed the TTTS Race for Hope to spread awareness and raise funds. As success of the event and awareness increased, Mr. Somers, along with the board, saw an opportunity to further support fetal syndromes and work directly with the leading fetal centers and medical professionals from around the world. This led to the creation of today's Fetal Hope Foundation.

We're not the experts,
but *they* are.

Fetal Hope's Medical Advisory Board is comprised of the top Fetal and Maternal Medical Teams treating fetal syndromes all over the country. Aligned with some of the world's leading fetal medicine centers, Fetal Hope was organized to assist families when diagnosed with a syndrome. To learn more, please visit our website at www.fetalhope.org.

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Double Takes

Can you guess whether the twins pictured on these pages are identical or fraternal? Send us your photos for the Doubletakes section at least three months prior to publication. All photos sent to TWINS™ Magazine become the property of TWINS™ Magazine and will not be returned. Photos should be accompanied by a signed photo release form that can be downloaded by visiting www.TwinsMagazine.com and by clicking on the Doubletakes Photos button. By submitting your photos to TWINS™ Magazine via US Mail or electronically you are releasing your rights to these photos for our use. Please note that we cannot use any professional photographs. On the back of your photos include an address label & phone number with your twins' names and ages along with their twin type (identical or fraternal). Send photographs to: TWINS™ Doubletakes ATTN: Art Director, 5748 South College Avenue, Unit D, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525.



1

Thomas & William,
6 Months
Arietta, GA



4

Holden & Makenzie
2 ½ Years
Watertown, NY



5

Katelyn & Jerilyn
2 Years
Paris, TX



6

Kami & Chrisily
6 Months
Trinidad, CO



10

Adam and Tyler
9 Months
Fall River, MA



11

Evan & Aaron
2 ½ Years
Hoffman Estates, IL



12

Clara & Sofia
21 Months (Sister
Olivia), New Kent, VA



16

Ava & Jack
3 Years
Hillsboro, OR



17

Arden & Emily
4 Years
Cantonment, FL



18

Alexander & Nicholas
12 Months
Wiseasset, ME

July/August



2

Cullen & Tatem
19 Months
Dublin, CA



3

Sara & Emily
4 Months
Demotte, IN



7

Joseph & Jackson
3 Years
Frederick, MD



8

Joey & Jordan
19 Months
Rockford, IL



9

Isabella & Ava
3 Years
Middletown, DE



13

Chloe & Sidney
7 Months
Mansfield, TX



14

Cale & Cole
4 Years
Cassville, MO



15

**Benjamin & Re-
bekah**
2 ½ Years



19

Abigail & Cooper
2 Years
Middleville, MI



20

Alexander & Nikki
6 Months
Porter Ranch, CA

Based on parental reports:

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

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Lifting Your Spirit

Raising multiples is not glamorous; it's hard work. At times life feels like nothing more than a continuous cycle of eat, poop, sleep, and repeat. In fact, some days can only be described as draining at best. But buried beneath those seemingly endless diaper changes, heaps of last week's laundry, meals fit to feed an entire army, and the day's seventh clean up on aisle three, lives a parent's spirit. Often the driving force behind calming the chaos, it deserves a little boost now and then. If today you find your spirit in need of a bit of TLC, then the following was written just for you.

Unlike raising a singleton, being blessed with twins, triplets, or more is a beautiful but complicated undertaking. That's why bi-monthly we pick up our copies of TWINS™ Magazine looking for advice, community, commonality, a good laugh, and a gentle pat on the back. Sometimes all we hope for while flipping through the pages is the assurance that yes, we'll make it through another day with limbs, sanity, and spirits intact. We want to know we're not alone because it's true, the power of commonality lifts the spirit like no other.

There is yet another way parents of multiples meet the uplifting power of commonality. We've all experienced that fantastic feeling when while out getting the week's groceries our paths cross with those of a complete stranger who has multiples as well. The connection is instantaneous. We begin to swap stories and advice, and in doing so find ourselves less anxious and beginning to smile and laugh. We feel proud of what we've accomplished and our spirits get a much needed lift; in fact we could talk for hours if it weren't for the remainder of our shopping list. Isn't it true that the gist of these random exchanges could be summed up by the title, "You Know you Have Multiples if...?"

So in honor of those blessed little chats in the produce section, and all the countless quirky ways parents of multiples might fill in the dots, come the following 15 possibilities. Understood best by those of us who live and breathe our multiples everyday, see if you find yourself in any of the following scenarios. Keep in mind as well that when life seems to be handing you only diaper rashes, unidentifiable carpet stains, and mealtimes requiring a raincoat, slickers, and a pair of goggles, it's best just to laugh it off. You know you have multiples if...

1. After obtaining a much needed, not to mention overdue oil change for your vehicle, you find yourself asking the mechanic, "Does that come with a twin's discount?"
2. In the case of an unfortunate collision involving your stroller and a passing Hummer, the stroller takes the win, hands down.
3. As a kid you witnessed your grandmother continuously confusing your name with those of your other siblings. You swore you'd never do that with your kids, then came your multiples. Oops, you spoke too soon.
4. Speaking of your grandmother, a long and grueling pregnancy with multiples has turned your midsection into an exact replica of hers. Thanks grandma!

5. You and your spouse have decided it's high time to buy a Tivo for one reason and one reason only: *Jon & Kate Plus 8*.
6. You've considered starting a buying club by opening up your basement to the general public on a weekly basis in an effort to unload all the outgrown clothes, toys, and gadgets that have created a virtual scaleable mountain your kids have now taken to climbing.
7. This is one of your most frequent thoughts: If someone saw it fit to give me multiples, I must have an extra pair of hands somewhere on my body that I don't know about. I really should look into finding them.
8. "Gapers Delay," a term synonymous with a big-city traffic jam, compliments of drivers who've slowed down to gawk at an accident, is the most accurate description of what you cause in the parking lot of the local grocer while loading your multiples and your groceries into the car.
9. "You've got your hands full." Those are the five words most commonly uttered to you by the general public. Can't they do better than that?
10. In the shopping world of your dreams everything would come in a case.
11. Gandhi, Winston Churchill, and Abraham Lincoln are all heroes commonly cited by the average person. Your list looks a little different: your parents, the babysitter, and Jon and Kate Gosselin.
12. Your version of the ultra-luxurious "me time" involves a toothbrush, toothpaste, and two minutes by a sink.
13. You're certain your post-pregnancy stretch marks, if deciphered by an archeologist, are an encrypted map indicating the location of long lost buried treasure.
14. While others may look at you and your army of children with pity or bewilderment you know you wouldn't trade your life for any other, most days that is.
15. The gallery of people who see it fit to inform you that your twins must be twice the work, twice the headache, and twice the expense will never understand the truth: your twins are twice the joy, twice the laughter, and exponentially priceless.

Kerri J. Reinbold, RN, BSN is a freelance writer from Western Michigan. She is a mother to Abe and Jake, 10-month-old fraternal twin boys. She writes a monthly inspirational column for Women's Lifestyle Magazine that is fitness and nutrition minded. In her

spare time she can be found giggling with her boys and husband, as well as hiking and reading. Laughter as good medicine has taken on a whole new meaning since giving birth to her boys. ♡



Searching everywhere for the greatest twin stroller?

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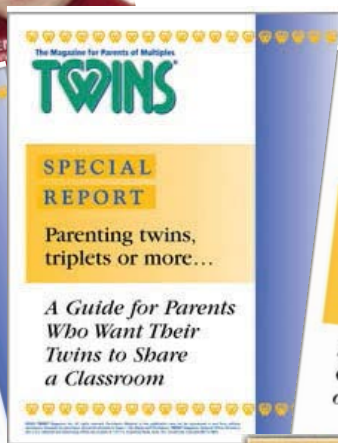
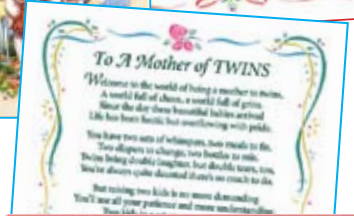
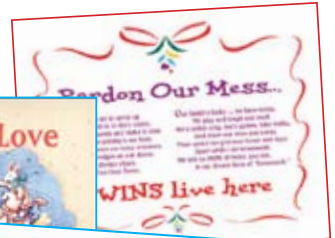
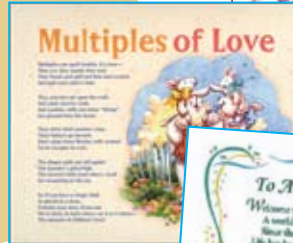
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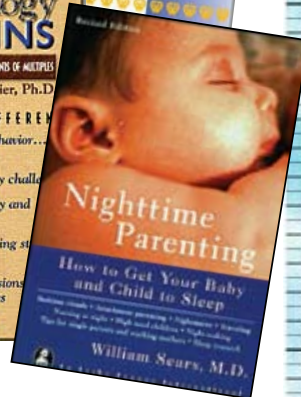
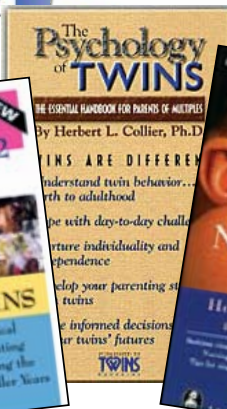
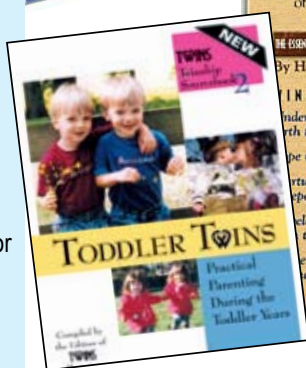
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