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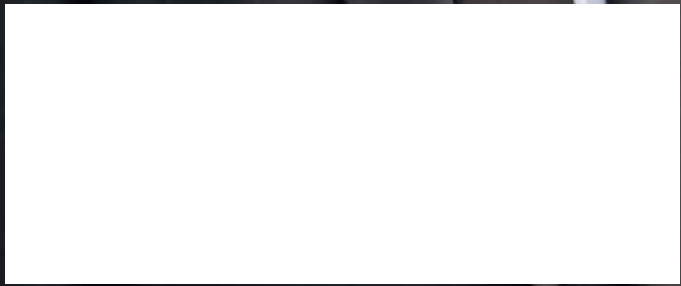
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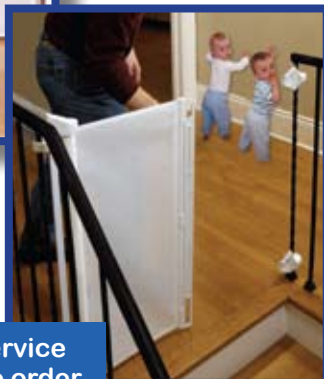
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COVER: Frontier Airline pilots and twin brothers, Rodd and Todd Rickenbach.

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Traveling with Twins? It Can be Done!

I have a friend that once told me that she and her husband only call it a vacation when they are going away together without their kids (they have five). It's called a 'trip' when they take the entire family. No matter what you call it, taking twins (& more) on vacation can be a lot fun. Our twins were only 5-months-old when we took them on their very first road trip in the car. We love taking road trips and have been enjoying annual treks with them ever since. I always try to tell new parents of multiples that you can't let having twins or multiples stop you from going out to the park, taking vacations or enjoying your life. Sure, you will get strange stares and rolling eyes from people who still believe that children should be seen and not heard, and you will also find that some places are much more kid-friendly than others but don't let that stop you from taking your twins with you on your next big 'trip'.

I can remember when the twins were 3-years-old and I drove 21 hours in a car with them by myself to my parents house taking that familiar drive from Colorado to California. This time however, I would be doing all the driving and not get to sit back and relax while my husband drove most of the way. Yes, it was nuts and stressful at times but by doing this, it really gave me confidence in my abilities to navigate with my twin toddlers, alone on the open road. To keep the twins happy, quiet and comfortable I came up with a brilliant plan. Before I left, I went to the dollar store and bought two different packs of birthday party treat bags that were colorful and fun. I also purchased animal crackers, gummy bears, goldfish crackers and a bunch of little toys and stuff that they hadn't seen before (you could recycle old happy meal toys for this, too!) I would mix it up and have some with a snack & juice box and others with just a couple of little toys. Every hundred miles or so I would say, "okay, guys, you get to open another present soon" if they didn't fight with each other and were good. It was an excellent motivator. Then when the time came, I would reach over in the passenger seat where my box of presents were and would pull out one treat bag for each of them to enjoy from the comfort of their car seat. They got so excited each time they would find what was waiting for them inside their very own travel goodie bag and it kept them busy, quiet, and occupied for the entire trip. This was such a great experience for me and because I was prepared with these fun things, it really made the 'trip' almost pleasurable. I will say it was fun for them to have something to look forward to and by doing this instead of them asking 'are we there yet?' one hundred times we exchanged that for 'is it time for another present?' Totally worth it, though...

This issue of TWINS™ Magazine is packed full of useful information themed around traveling with your multiples and has a ton of great tips for families just in time for the busy summer travel months. Check out this issue's Nanny Column and a special tear-out toddler twin-packing list. The Quadfather is back this issue with 'Trip Tested Tips to Twin Travel' and popular author Elizabeth Lyons shares her humorous thoughts on traveling out with twins. Before you go on your next trip you will want to read the article by Dr. Harley Rotbart entitled, 'Germ Proof Travel with Twins' and also review our 'Ages & Stages' section where we share our top picks on travel gear & other travel related products we recommend. Our feature cover story this issue is all about two identical twin airline pilots from Frontier Airlines that are following the same career path and now even working side-by-side. Plus, we have a great feature from three mothers of twins that have gone to Maui, New Zealand and on a Disney Cruise with their twins and have lived to tell the tale! Also featured in this issue is a touching story about how strong the twin-bond can be in 'Hypotonia: A Moving Story,' and another article about one family's journey with sensory processing disorder. We have an article that explores the subject of what to do when twins differ in abilities plus, read about life with a set of twins and sextuplets in my in-depth interview with Kate Gosselin from the popular reality TV show on TLC called *Jon & Kate Plus 8* & so much more. Thanks to everyone that sent us feedback & responses from our March/April issue so be sure to keep on sending us your thoughts. It's time to celebrate 'multiple motherhood' as we approach Mother's Day this month so please take the time to enjoy your family and all of your blessings in life—Happy Mother's Day my fellow mothers of multiples!

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa D. Reed, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
TWINS™ Magazine



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Multiple MOMs Rock Sends Gift Package to J-Lo & Marc Anthony!

After the recent birth this March with boy/girl twins, Jennifer Lopez & Marc Anthony have received lots of gifts for their new bundles of joy. Beth Smith, owner of Multiple MOMs Rock clothing company wanted to welcome them to this exclusive new parenting 'club' by sending them a few of the shirts her company produces like a "Multiple MOMs Rock" shirt a "Raising Twins is an Extreme Sport" shirt and she even included a shirt for Marc that says "The Few, The Proud, The Exhausted... Dad of Twins." Smith believes that parents across America and throughout the world who have lived through nights of two, three, four and more babies crying, boxes upon boxes of diapers and the expense of doing everything at once (shoes, preschool, new bikes) share a common bond. "Nobody understands quite like a mom, dad, or grandparent of multiples. We don't need to explain anything to each other. We all remember. We all get it," says Smith. "One of my goals is to honor those who put

in the late nights trying to quiet a baby while keeping the other asleep, or negotiate "fairness" between toddlers. You deserve to be appreciated." Other fun examples of clothing parents can purchase include: Raising Twins is an Extreme Sport (also available for triplets and quads), Why Can't I Have a Time Out? The Few, The Proud, The Exhausted... Grandpa of Twins; and Grandma of Twins, Ecstatic Woman in Need of a Nap which is also available in a tote bag and shirt. The company's apparel focuses on creating elegant, but humorous sayings about raising multiples paired with cool designs for moms, dads and grandparents of twins, triplets and quads that come in attractive colors, fit well, and are also extremely comfortable. You can check out all of their cool designs at www.multiplemomsrock.com.

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Each year NOMOTC members gather for an annual meeting and convention. In addition to taking care of the business of the National Organization, this event offers camaraderie and bonding with other mothers of multiples from across the country. Convention attendees have an opportunity to hear expert speakers and attend special workshops on a variety of subjects which offer assistance to clubs and individuals. There is Showcase Shopping, tours of the city of Boston, a formal banquet and much more! This year NOMOTC is offering on-line registration. It's quick and easy and available by going to www.nomotc.org and click on the link for convention 2008 to register today, and learn more about the exciting and fun convention being held in Boston this summer! The deadline to register for the NOMOTC National Convention in Boston is: June 10. Visit www.nomotc.org for more details. ♥



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My Major Mistake ... I Apologize!

To all the readers of TWINS™ Magazine, I would like to apologize for some of the editor's comments that were printed in the March/April 2008 issue of TWINS™ Magazine in the Mailbox/Letters section.

After moving the entire operation in January, this was our very first issue as the new publishers and in my rush to produce the issue in less than a month; I included letters and correspondence that were actually sent to the previous owners, along with their responses, not my own. I did change a few of the editor's notes and responded to some of the letters but the majority of the editor's responses were not written by me and I included them in this section anyway. We are very sorry for running these comments and we had absolutely no intention of offending any of our loyal readers. We can assure you that our company in no way discriminates against anyone with special needs or has any policies against using special needs children in our magazine. We received numerous letters from readers that were angry and quite upset that these comments were printed and on behalf of the company and our entire staff at TWINS™ Magazine, we apologize for this mistake and can assure you that this will not happen again in the future. We do appreciate your loyalty to TWINS™ Magazine and want to thank you for your understanding. ~ Sincerely, Christa D. Reed, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
TWINS™ Magazine

Dear Ms. Reed:

Thank you for taking time to talk to me the other day about my disappointment after reading the editor's response to "I Really Want My Twins to Appear in Double Takes" in the March/April issue. I have never called a magazine after reading something and I am very glad I did after I got to talk to you. I do appreciate your explanation and completely understand what happened. You are a kind and sincere woman and I admire you for taking responsibility for a situation you had no control over. I am a proud mother of twins with special needs and my husband Eddie and I feel extremely blessed raising our twins, Marco and Angelina. ~ Nancy Halle, Washington DC



Count to 10!

It all started a little over two years ago in the OR delivery room! Count to 10 my ever so encouraging husband suggested! Three hours of counting Liam was born. Then after a c-section; his twin brother Avery was born. We have been counting to 10 ever since that miraculous day! The counting continued as we grew with the boys. It was a wonderful blessing - x2, but it was very trying at first. When we ran out of possible remedies for all the crying, it was again my husband that suggested counting

to 10! It actually works to calm a frantic new Mommy down! It was around 4 months we started sleep training the boys. It was a very hard and long process. This time my hubby had to hold me down for the count to 10! I tried my hardest to get in there to rescue my screaming babies, but he persisted "Let them learn to sleep!" And they did; after MUCH counting! Motherhood is so much better when we get our proper sleep! Numbers are a lot of fun too. We started reading to our sons from birth. We'd prop them up on our lap and open the books, simultaneously their eyes opened wide as well! They love books, and counting. It soon became a game. We'd count everything in the house over and over! Before they could talk they would count with their tiny little fingers in the air. At age one, they could count to 10! Amazing! A favorite song of theirs is "One, Two, buckle my shoe...." They just go crazy for counting! Even in the grocery store you can hear my boys yelling the numbered aisle we have entered. It's hard to tell them to count softly; being the proud Mommy I am! We do stir up quite the crowd too. I feel like the double the fun counting side show at the supermarket! It's a ton of fun though. At age one they could even recognize numbers out of order; on flashcards. Now they are two, and it's the stages of "No" and "Mine!" Whatever toy Avery has, Liam needs to have, and vice versa of course. Counting to 10 is the only thing that has helped. If they are squabbling over the one of many blue blocks, I calmly tell them to count to 10. Either they will continue counting to 20, or forget about the blue block all together. It all works out in the end. Raising 2-year-old twin toddlers is such a joy, but at some moments I still find counting to 10 works for me too! ~ Stacey Powell

Response to Mom with Twins Attending Separate High Schools

I am a psychologist with twin daughters in twelfth grade. My girls went to the same private high school. Even though there were 250 kids in a grade, they shared a group of friends; this had its own problems. One of them had wanted to go to a different high school, but for reasons of family cohesion, to make things equal, and for my own convenience, I encouraged her to attend the same school as her sister. I wonder to this day if this was the right decision. It is so difficult to know what is right and what is wrong when raising children. Just because your daughters have struggled doesn't mean that you have made a mistake. If each is pursuing her own path, then that is good thing, even if it is painful. If your daughter doesn't want to switch, is that so bad? I know Bronx Science is a very wonderful school, but there are many roads to a successful life. Help the girls to talk to each other about their feelings, their jealousy and envy. Plan family activities that they will be sure to enjoy, spend time with each alone to find out more of what she is thinking. You might want to look at the book *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children*, Joan Friedman, MSW, PhD., De Capo Press, 2008. It is a great book and discusses many of these issues. ~ Best of Luck, C. B. Meyer

I Could See the Change

I wanted you to know that I didn't even read your introduction and didn't know about the change in ownership of TWINS™ Magazine; however, reading through the magazine as I always do, I could tell it was much different this time. It seems more professional, more up to date, and honestly, more relevant. I was considering stopping my subscription, as it seemed like it wasn't

that useful, but now I'll continue subscribing and look forward to the articles that will help when it comes to our one-year-old twin boys. ~ *Thanks! Nancy S.*

TTTS Survivors Appreciate Information

First off I want to compliment you on your dedication to raising TTTS awareness. I look for its mention in every issue and the coverage just keeps getting better and better! My two-and-a-half year-old twin boys are TTTS survivors. It was suggested to us by our doctors that we abort them, and they are perfectly healthy, adorable and charming! We understand the importance of parents being armed with the knowledge that there is treatment and there is hope! I especially like how you are intent on making sure that all mothers of twins with only one placenta are on the lookout for this syndrome. Now if we could only get all of the OBGYNs up to speed! I intend to bring the Race for Hope to Chicago in 2009, and have already been in contact with Lonnie about getting started. I am so excited that someone with the passion and conviction that you seem to have is in control of such a powerful tool for communication and change. If there is ever anything I can do to help you, please let me know. ~ *Julie Stocking*

Keeping Multiples Together in School

As a teacher and a mother of twins, I always read with interest the letters and articles in your magazine about keeping twins together in the classroom. I have never been prompted to write, however, until reading Kim Walker's letter in the March/April 2008 issue. Ms. Walker, like many parents I have known over recent years, seems to think that her children are the only ones in the school with issues to be considered. She also equates having triplets with having a handicap (saying, "I believe they already make plenty of exceptions — for special needs children in the district, which includes ramps, aides, and such"). These "exceptions" allow the students to access the curriculum or the building in general and should not be compared to keeping your triplets in the same classroom. A student with a disability is covered under special education laws and a school district is required to provide fair and accessible education. As a teacher, I know firsthand what goes into making classroom lists and determining homerooms, and the principal at her school has said what I've heard my principal tell many parents in the past. Children are placed in a classroom based on several factors, including placing them with the right teacher. Different teachers have different styles and not all children are the right fit for one classroom. In addition, my principal, my fellow teachers and I spend hours making classroom lists for the next year. We take into account things like the number of IEP or 504 plans so that each classroom has a balance of high, average and special needs students. We balance by gender, by student personality (a class with several strong personalities can easily become a classroom where little learning can take place, if the teacher is constantly defusing situations), by types of assistance required (we need to be sure our special educator can service all children as necessary, it doesn't make sense to put three pull-out reading students in three different classrooms), and friendships. To be told by a parent that their children must stay together simply because they are siblings will throw this delicate balance out of whack. Every year parents call up after receiving their homeroom notification, and many call in the spring when we begin discussions, with requests like, "His older sister has Mrs. So and

So, we'd like him placed with that teacher as well," or, "Joey and Jeffy are such good friends, we'd like Joey to be in Jeffy's class again so he has a friend." As much as we'd like to accommodate these requests, this cannot be our first requirement in placing a student and being a multiple falls under the same category, in my opinion. While I support Mrs. Walker's desire to do what is best for her children, she needs to remember that they are not the only children in the classroom and the principal is simply trying to make the best groupings overall. I would request that she reconsider comparing her wants with the very true needs of a disabled learner, and remember that the principal and teachers are professionals with many years of experience in balancing classrooms for all learners and students. ~ *Amy Karlan*



Mom with 20-year-old Twins Says, 'Thanks!'

I wish you good luck in your new endeavors running the magazine. This magazine was a great inspiration for me when I had my twin boys 20 yrs ago this May. It's fun for me to go thru the website and magazine every now and then to see what's going on in twins'



world. Just want to thank your magazine for those 1st five years, it was very helpful. Anytime I would meet a new impending mom of twins I always suggested this magazine to them. Keep up the good work. ~ *Good luck, Darci Rickert*

Another Twin Diagnosed with Cancer—Looking for a Support Buddy

I am the proud MOM of 5 children; three boys ages 12, 10 and 6 and identical twin girls age 3 1/2. Every issue I read I am pressured to write in. March/April 2008 stood out as I was reading the mail boxes. Our daughter Gabby was Diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma (a rare form of childhood cancer), and I too am looking for a buddy. Gabby has undergone two surgeries, has had 43 weeks of chemo and radiation, and has been given a clean bill of health. Her bond with her twin sister has just been amazing. They support each other and are such a wonderful team. I believe that through this bond they can conquer almost anything. Being identical twins we are very concerned for her sister Elly. We have been reassured that this has never been diagnosed in identical twins. We would appreciate it if your readers have ever heard of any cases of both twins being diagnosed with cancer if you could let us know so we in turn could inform our Doctors. We also want to let you know how much we appreciate seeing our daughter's picture used in the frame on page 35 "Twice as Nice". We just love to open your magazine and see their smiling faces. Who would have ever thought we would be here now. If you are interested more in Gabby's heroic journey she has a caring bridge web site. ~ *Thank you, Jill Cunningham*

I Blogged About Your Magazine

My husband and I are the proud parents of two sets of twins—the first IVF babies, the second set a gigantic surprise. I write a blog

Cont'd on Pg. 9



BY REBECCA MOSKOWSKI, M.D., FAAFP

Dr. Moskewski 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. Moskewski was the editor of the popular book compiled by NOMOTC entitled *Twins to Quints*, which can be found at www.twinstoquints.com.

Coping With Acid Reflux

Q: I am a mother of 7-month-old boy/girl twins. Our babies were born prematurely at 36 weeks and required a bit of help nursing. Eventually, they both caught on and things were going well until at about 3-months when my son started to refuse the breast. It began only happening from time-to-time and then progressively got worse. After consulting lactation specialists, we started giving him a bottle full time. He would take a few drinks and then choke on his milk and then get very upset and it would be difficult to get him to resume drinking his bottle. He would scream, cry, arch his body and throw a complete fit. We tried changing my diet, changing formula, changing bottles - nothing worked. He then got a (barium) swallow study, which was normal. After visiting a GI Specialist at Stanford, they believe that he has severe acid reflux. We are exhausted, frustrated and very concerned for our son. Do you have any suggestions for us? ~ RT, Chico CA



A: Acid reflux can be a very vexing problem for parents. The medical term for this condition is GER, or gastro-esophageal reflux. What this really means is that some of the stomach contents and stomach acid are back-washing up into the esophagus, or swallowing tube, and causing pain and irritation of the esophagus. GER is actually very common in infants and can occur in up to 25 percent of babies. It is most commonly manifested by severe "spitting up" or wet burps. It can range in severity from only a moderate amount of spitting up, to colic, to the most severe form, which your baby has, in which he can refuse feedings altogether due to pain with eating. The baby associates feeding with pain and this can cause him to resist feeding so he can avoid the pain. This can cause poor weight gain, and can lead to other complications over time, such as strictures or narrowing of the esophagus. Some babies rarely can develop respiratory problems due to stomach contents in the mouth, nose and lungs via the windpipe. The vast majority of babies do very well and do not manifest any severe complications and outgrow the condition by their first birthday. Most don't have any problems with growth or temperament.

The cause of reflux is a weakened sphincter muscle between the stomach and esophagus, called the lower esophageal sphincter, or LED. Some babies are born with an immature digestive system. In other cases, it can be caused by excess pressure on the abdomen (such as tight clothing), overfeeding, and food allergies.

GER is diagnosed most often based on symptoms and a physical exam. In mild cases, no other testing is necessary and treatment can be started. If more severe symptoms occur or if the baby does not respond to treatment, other diagnostic tests may be performed. These usually include x-ray studies, called an upper GI test, a 24 hour pH probe study, endoscopy, or a milk study, which is a series of x-rays showing how food moves through the digestive system. Not all of these tests are usually required. Since over 50 percent of babies can have some form of spitting up, most require only physical measures to resolve and some require no treatment. Initially treatment will consist of smaller, more frequent feedings, gentle burping during feeding, keeping the baby upright during and after feedings, and avoidance of tight clothing over the abdomen. Raising the head of the crib may be needed. Some suggest thickening of the formula and experimenting with different types of formula or adjusting mom's diet when she is breast feeding. Breast milk is usually the best for feeding in babies with GER, as it is more easily and quickly digested.

More severe cases can require medication along with physical measures. Medications can be used and include antacids, acid suppressors, acid blockers, and motility medicines. Antacids neutralize stomach acid and are widely available. This includes medicines such as Mylanta. Acid suppressors help reduce the production of acid and include medicines such as Zantac and Tagamet. Acid blockers, as their name implies, completely block acid production and includes Prilosec and Prevacid and others. Motility agents will increase muscle tone and help to move food through the digestive tract. These include Reglan and Urecholine. Sometimes a combination of medicines is required or some experimentation with different types of medicine is needed. When weight gain becomes a serious issue, a feeding tube may be suggested. Lastly, surgery can be performed to help tighten the lower esophageal sphincter. This surgery, called fundoplication, is reserved for the small number of babies in which serious growth problems or breathing problems occur.

As you have indicated, taking care of a baby or babies with GER can tax even the most experienced parents. Lack of sleep, constant struggles with feeding, cleaning up messes, and coping with numerous doctors' visits and visits to specialists may have you feeling alone and frustrated. Most parents need some help to cope. Try these:

- Join a support group for GER (such as www.reflux.org)
- Explore finding other parents in similar situations who have coped through groups such as the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (www.nomotc.org), which has a program through its Special Needs subsection to hook up parents who are dealing with GER
- Become educated about the condition
- Allow others to help you with childcare
- Remember to take care of yourself by getting more rest and taking a break when needed
- And, lastly but most important, never take out your frustration on your babies



Do you have a question for our Doc? If so, send an e-mail to: twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com and include 'Ask the Doc' in the subject line and we will try and include your questions in upcoming issues.

Mailbox - Cont'd from Pg. 7

to keep our family far away up-to-date with the goings-on in our house, and mentioned an article I read in your magazine on my post today. Really, three nights to get your twins to stay in bed? I really enjoy your magazine, but three nights to get your twins to stay in bed? If you want to read what I wrote please check out: <http://mightystuber.blogspot.com/2008/03/well-you-fooled-us.html>. ~ Susan Stuber

Pennsylvania's Twins' Bill Desperately Needs Your Help!

The Pennsylvania House "Twins' Bill" was expected to receive a passing vote to move through the House of Representatives, in early December, however it has now been sabotaged. Representative Thomas A. Tangretti has added an amendment to HB65 that has absolutely nothing to do with twins in the classroom. I have been told that as long as it is attached to our bill, our bill will not move. We have asked Representative Tangretti to withdraw his amendment, however his has so far refused. We need to do all we can to pressure him to withdraw his amendment, A04755, from our Twins' Bill, HB65. We need everyone's help persuade Representative Tangretti to withdraw his amendment. If you live in PA, Contact your own Representative and ask him/her to contact Representative Tangretti and request that Rep. Tangretti withdraw amendment A04755 from HB65. Everyone across the US can contact Representative Tangretti and urge him to withdraw amendment A04755 from HB65. You can go to www.ramotc.org/TwinsLegislationPA.html for more information. His contact information is: E-mail: ttangret@pahouse.net; Harrisburg Office: 328 Irvis Office Building, PO Box 202057, Harrisburg, PA 17120-2057, Phone (717)783-5963. Or you can contact the Greensburg Office at: 105 Station Place, 101 Ehalt Street, Greensburg, PA 15601-2300, Phone (724) 834-6400. Also please ask everyone you know to do the same. Thank you all so much! I'll keep you posted on our progress. **Victoria Zimmerman, Pennsylvania Twins Law Campaign Mohrsville, PA 19541 • vawace@epix.net • www.twinslaw.com**

Arizona Needs Help with Legislation Impacting the Education of Multiples!

Recently the House of Representatives in Arizona passed a bill 32 to 27 with one not voting that will soon be introduced to the Arizona Senate that allows parents of multiples to determine whether their children should be in same or separate classrooms (House Bill 2039, sponsored by Representative Mark Anderson and co-sponsored by Representatives Tobin and Schapira). School administrators will make a decision for families with multiples with no knowledge or consideration of the children and their unique relationship. All of the research that has been done on this issue supports a flexible placement policy, where the decision to separate is determined on a case by case basis, rather than an arbitrary, across the board policy. This legislation insures that schools have a flexible placement policy that includes parental preferences. Research and additional information regarding the need for this legislation can be found at <http://www.twinslaw.com/research.html>. If you have any questions, or need further information, please email Parents in Support of Arizona Twins Legislation at: aztwinslaw@hotmail.com.

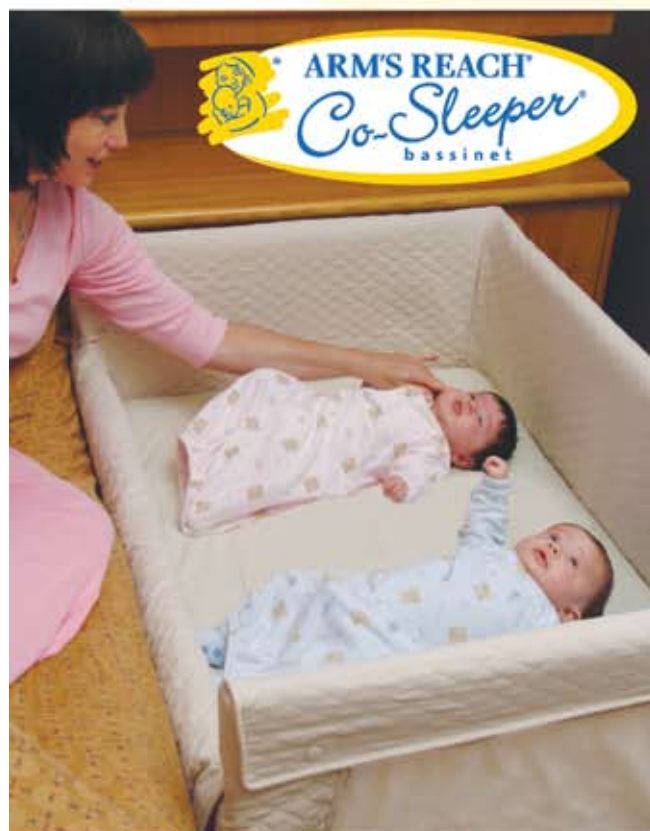
Exciting New Changes

Cont'd on Pg. 23



"...a truly wonderful nighttime attachment tool — makes breastfeeding easier — babies sleep safely close for comfort and security."

Dr. William Sears
Author and child care specialist



Your twins sleep snugly and safely attached to parental bed



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Hypotonia: A Moving Story...

It is every parent's worst nightmare: there is something wrong with my child, but no one can tell me what it is.

That happened with my daughter, Sheila. Born January 31, 2003 by C-section, Sheila came into the world a healthy, happy six pound fourteen ounce baby (not bad for a fraternal twin). Only later did we learn about the knot in her umbilical cord. If my wife had delivered Sheila vaginally or the pregnancy had gone the full 40 weeks, the knot would have tightened, starving Sheila's brain of oxygen. She could have been paralyzed for life. Or worse, she might not have lived at all. Over the ensuing weeks and months, we grew concerned with Sheila's development. While her twin sister, McKenna, was sitting-up, rolling around, and on the move, Sheila seemed content to lie where we put her. When we went to pick her up, we noticed something peculiar. It was as if she melted into our arms. Instead of holding herself up, Sheila flopped like a rag doll.

Concerned she wasn't developing, we took Sheila to see her pediatrician, but he couldn't find any signs of illness, injury, or paralysis. The only hint had been the knot in the umbilical cord. At first, the pediatrician chalked it up to developmental delay and told us not to worry. Yet we could not shake the feeling something else was wrong; something maybe the pediatrician didn't—or couldn't—know about. So we returned to the pediatrician, told him our concerns, and this time we pressed for further exams. The pediatrician suggested we take Sheila to see a pediatric neurologist. A neurologist? The word walloped our hearts. Whenever a doctor referred you to a specialist, you knew there was trouble, but a neurologist? That was trouble times ten. After all, the idea something might be wrong with your child's brain; it's something hard for a parent to get their mind around. So, we made an appointment with Dr. Fereydoun Dehkharghani at Children's Mercy Hospital. Dr. Dehkharghani ordered a CT scan of Sheila's head. The sight of Sheila's big, watery brown eyes while she lay strapped to the CT scan table is an image I will carry all the days of my life. She looked at me as if to ask, "Will I be okay, Daddy? Please tell me I'll be okay, Daddy." Not being able to answer her, not being able to make her better made my heart hurt. After all, it's Daddy's job to protect his children, to keep them safe. And at that moment, I was helpless. All I could do was hold her hand and reassure her, even while I wondered if she would be okay. I wondered even more when the results came back.

At a later appointment, Dr. Dehkharghani sat us down – I held Sheila on my lap, cradling her as if I could protect her from the diagnosis. When it came, though, all I could do was look at my wife and the doctor dumbfounded. The doc-



Four years after physical therapy with sister McKenna (l) forever by her side, Sheila (r) look forwards to many exuberant days ahead.

tor told us the reason for Sheila's rag-doll condition was due to hypotonia.

Hypo-what-y-a? Hypotonia, also known as Floppy Child Syndrome. It meant Sheila had low muscle tone. While the muscles themselves were fine, a short circuit between the message the brain sent out and the message the muscles received meant the muscles didn't respond, as they should have. The result: Sheila could not hold herself up, could not get her knees under her, and could not crawl. And there was a chance she might not ever walk. Doctors

don't consider hypotonia a disease in and of itself.

Instead, it's more often than not associated with another neurological disorder, most commonly, Cerebral Palsy. Other diseases or disorders associated with hypotonia include Prader-Willi Syndrome, Down syndrome, Myasthenia gravis, Muscular dystrophy, Marfan's syndrome, and Trisomy 13, to name a few. But not all hope was lost. Indeed, Sheila proved to be far from it. First, it turned out Dr. Dehkharghani was a leading expert on hypotonic children. And second,

Sheila would prove herself far stronger and more resilient than most adults. But this is not just a story about triumph over tragedy (though there is that); it's also a story about love. A bond between two sisters few can ever truly understand. Or appreciate.

Through Children's Mercy Hospital, we enrolled Sheila in a Missouri program called First Steps. Toni Harrison, the program's local director explained, "Our program is free to children birth to age 3, who live in the state of Missouri and who have a 50 percent developmental delay or a medical diagnosis. The program provides occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, developmental therapy, behavior therapy and adaptive equipment. Each child receives services based on their individual needs."

In late Oct. 2003, Sheila began her physical therapy through First Steps. She was 9 months old and could barely get to a seated position. She could not hold it and she had gotten up on her elbows and knees only two months earlier. The outlook appeared grim. Each week, Sherri Hedricks, the physical therapist from First Steps, worked with Sheila on developing her muscle tone and control. The exercises consisted of playing with blocks, rings, and other shapes. Sometimes, Sherri placed the block or ring out of Sheila's

"Other diseases or disorders associated with hypotonia include Prader-Willi Syndrome, Down syndrome, Myasthenia gravis, Muscular dystrophy, Marfan's syndrome, and Trisomy 13, to name a few."

reach, forcing Sheila to move to get it. At first, it all seemed cruel. I watched as Sheila struggled for the object, heart in my throat, wanting to help her, but knowing she had to do this. Her anxious, big-brown eyes often looked for affirmation, for some kind word to let her know she would still be loved if she fails. Yet, she didn't. On the contrary, Sheila surpassed everyone's expectations. She crawled within the first month of physical therapy. By 14 months she was taking her first steps alone. She ended therapy after just six months and all the while, her twin sister, McKenna remained a silent, but steadfast cheerleader.

People often talk about the special bond between twins. Never was this truer than with Sheila and McKenna. While Sheila took her first tentative steps with the aid of nearby furniture, and she progressed through therapy, at the same time, McKenna slowed her progress. She kept hold of the furniture for support to walk (just as Sheila did) long after she needed it. No one knows for certain what goes through the mind of a child so young, but it was as if to say, "For you, sister, I won't let go until you're ready to let go." At subsequent doctor's visits, McKenna stayed close to Sheila, watching over her as Dr. Dehkarghani poked and prodded sister, sometimes insisting, she, too, got the same. And as is often with twins, what one wants the other wants as well. After all, you have to be fair.

So what was the result of all the tests, all the physical therapy, all the heartache and stress of waiting? What did time in due course reveal? As it turned out, Sheila's hypotonia was not associated with any other disease or disorder. She has what the doctor called, "centralized hypotonia," where there is no underlying condition. But what caused the hypotonia? Since there is no disease or disorder associated with it, we are left with no answers, only questions. Which now brings us back to the knot in Sheila's umbilical cord; could that be the cause of the hypotonia? No one knows for sure, and while she may live a normal, healthy life, Sheila will always have low muscle tone. In the future, it might just mean she's more flexible than others are. Again, only time will tell but one thing is for certain, her twin sister, McKenna, will always be there to cheer her on. ♥



"Once, Sheila could not hold herself up, could not get her knees under her, and could not crawl. There was a chance she might not ever walk. And, oh, how she proved everybody wrong."

Hypotonia in Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)

By M. Allison Wixted, Pharm.D. & Dennis D. Wixted, M.D.

• **Description:** All children with Down Syndrome (DS) have some degree of hypotonia, or low muscle tone. Children with DS may therefore appear to have "floppy" muscles. All muscles in the body are affected, including skeletal (those attached to bones) & smooth (those in the organs) muscles. The collective effect is that children with DS are developmentally delayed in reaching milestones such as walking, talking & may even require medical intervention (1).

• **Treatment:** There are many effective treatment options for hypotonia in children with DS. Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies are all typically offered to children with DS to address hypotonia. For instance, assistance with crawling, walking and other gross motor function (function powered by large skeletal muscles) can be provided by a Physical Therapist, who can recommend braces to stabilize "loose ankles," leg rotation straps to stabilize loose hip & knee joints, or special high-topped shoes to stabilize the lower legs. An Occupational Therapist can assist with fine motor activity like learning to use the pincer grasp to eat, learning to use a sippy cup independently, and learning how to suck effectively from a bottle. Speech Therapists can provide oral stimulation exercises & activities you can do with your child to promote speech development. For other types of treatment related to hypotonia, including surgical & medical intervention, consult your child's pediatrician (1).

• **Inspirational Story:** Despite multiple developmental delays associated with global hypotonia, the good news is that therapy works for many children with DS and some even achieve amazing physical feats! Karen Gaffney, a young woman with DS, recently swam the 9-mile length of Lake Tahoe in frigid waters, something that few typical individuals have accomplished! In '08, she plans to swim the Maui Channel. She has also established the Karen Gaffney Foundation, which encourages individuals with DS to "push the limits of what they can accomplish" and travels the country delivering inspirational speeches to large audiences. She spoke at the '07 Conference for the National Down Syndrome Congress (2). Watch NBC's inspira-

tional *Today Show* segment about Karen Gaffney's Lake Tahoe swim at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/#22396452> (2).

• Recommended Resources:

- *SECOND EDITION: Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parents' Guide*, Edited by Karen Stray-Gundersen. Woodbine House, Inc. 1995.
- *Topics in Down Syndrome: Fine Motor Skills in Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Maryanne Buni, BSc OT(c). Woodbine House, Inc. 1998.
- *Topics in Down Syndrome: Gross Motor Skills in Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Patricia C. Winders, P.T. Woodbine House, Inc. 1997.
- *Topics in Down Syndrome: Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Libby Kumin, Ph.D., CCC-SLP. Woodbine House, Inc. 2003.
- *Topics in Down Syndrome: Medical & Surgical Care for Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents*, Edited by D.C. Van Dyke, M.D., Philip Mattheis, M.D., Susan Schoon Eberly, M.A., and Janet Williams, R.N., Ph.D. Woodbine House, Inc. 1995.
- National Down Syndrome Congress: www.ndscenter.org
- National Down Syndrome Society: www.ndss.org

The Drs. Wixted are inspired by their 3-year-old twin daughter, Taylor, who has Down Syndrome. They participate in a variety of local & national movements to promote acceptance & support for families of children with disabilities & are in the early stages of founding a nonprofit to benefit families of children with DS who are hospitalized.

Sources Cited:

1. *SECOND EDITION: Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parents' Guide*, Edited by Karen Stray-Gundersen. Woodbine House, Inc.:1995.
2. *NBC's Today Show* segment on Karen Gaffney's swim across Lake Tahoe. Original Air Date: 12/26/07. www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/#22396452

Family Fare

By Debra G. Baggett

Planning for family vacations can be fun! Taking long road trips with twins or multiples doesn't need to be stressful, hectic, or feared. Use this time to reconnect as a family and see this beautiful country of ours first hand. Food on the road can be high in price and fat. I've come up with a sure-to-please recipe that is versatile and easy. It will satisfy the kids' and parents' pallets and offers a little something different than fast food.

Pizza on-the-go



- SHOPPING LIST:**
- Frozen bread dough, thawed
 - ¼ pound of provolone cheese
 - ¼ pound of salami
 - ½ small red onion (optional)
 - 3 ounces of pepperoni
 - ¼ cup, plus ½ tbsp, parmesan cheese
 - 1 egg
 - 1 tbsp water
 - 3 tbsp flour
 - ½ tsp garlic powder
 - ½ tsp oregano
 - Non-stick cooking spray
 - 1 tbsp olive oil

This is a great take-along meal. It requires very little planning and can be prepared in 30 minutes. The meats and cheeses can be changed too. Try ham and swiss or roast beef and provolone.

HOW TO PREPARE:

Preheat oven to 425. Thaw bread dough according to package. Flour a flat surface and roll out the bread dough into an 11x17 inch rectangle. Layer the provolone, salami, red onion, pepperoni, and ¼ cup of parmesan. In small bowl beat the egg and water together to create an egg wash. Brush the edges of the dough with the egg wash. Fold one long edge over the meat and cheese layers. Fold the other long edge over the first. Fold and pinch ends to seal the dough. Lightly coat an 11x17 inch cookie sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Place the dough, seam down, on the cookie sheet.

Brush the top of the dough with the egg wash. Sprinkle with the garlic powder, oregano, and ½ tsp of parmesan cheese. With a small knife, poke holes in the top of the dough to vent the pizza. Bake for 20 minutes. Let it cool for 5 minutes, slice, and wrap in foil.

HOW TO SERVE:

This sandwich will stay warm for several hours if you wrap it in foil and put it in an insulated lunch box. Serve with chips and carrot sticks. If you are stopping at a picnic area to eat, serve it with pizza sauce for dipping, otherwise it is great as is. Serves 4.

TIME SAVING TIPS:

If you do not want to take the time to thaw the bread dough, call your local pizza parlor and buy their dough. Most offer this for a nominal charge. For this recipe, you will need dough for a large pizza. ♡

Get Organized

How many times have you heard, "Are we there yet?" How many times can you watch the same three movies? By the time you get to your destination, the kids are bug-eyed from cartoon movies and video games.

Before you leave for your road trip this year, make the trip fun and interesting for your family. You don't have to dread the long car ride anymore. It's easy and takes only a little time to do. Create an activity book for your children to take on the vacation.

1. Go to your favorite on-line mapping service and print the map of your trip. The route is already highlighted for you.
2. Get stickers of the things they might see along the way.
3. Make a folder for each child. Place the map, stickers, and some blank pages in a folder.



Other suggestions to think about for inclusion: Small chapter book, Travel games, Comic book.

Children will actually look at the area where you are traveling. It will keep them occupied and is something that they can refer back to throughout the trip. And it will give them the tools to see where they are and if they are there yet. Afterwards, it makes a great souvenir for them to have.

Check out the following website where you can print a multitude of activity pages for your children, including pages for a car travel activity book: www.enchantedlearning.com. ♡

Tips for Traveling with Toddler Twins



By Michelle LaRowe Conover

Just married, you scamper off ready to begin your long awaited honeymoon. You've finished up the festivities and although completely exhausted, you've managed to board the airplane and make your way back to your seats in one piece. You and yours settle in, relieved that you finally have time to breathe. Half conscious, you're actually looking forward to the long flight ahead that will provide you with the perfect opportunity to catch up on some much needed Z's.

So you think... Not a few minutes of slumber pass, and you're awakened by screeches and screams (and the occasional kick to the back of the seat) that make you want to literally pull out your hair. As time goes on, so do the tantrums... in stereo. You're the lucky kid free couple that's been seated in front of the family with unruly toddler twins, and the winner of a no cost, no harm dose of birth control. So whether they've been your twins or someone else's, chances are you can probably easily relate to the scenario above. Even if you can't, you've probably learned on your own that traveling with toddler twins can be a trip to paradise or purgatory and it really can go either way in an instant. So when traveling with your toddler twins in tow, what can you do to ensure that you'll be holding a nonstop ticket to paradise?

Plan in advance

You'd be surprised how much time and energy you'll save, and how much smoother your trip will go, if you invest a little time up front doing some travel research and planning. When planning your family getaway, there are a few things that every family with twins should know well before departing for their trip. If flying, you'll want to know what the airlines policy is with regards to seating arrangements for children. Some airlines only allow one car seat per row and don't allow children to sit in bulkhead seating. Others offer drastically reduced fares for seats purchased for children under age two, making it worthwhile to purchase individual seats for your toddler twins, rather than to risk dealing with the lap wiggles from your dynamic duo. You'll also want to consider what you can rent, borrow or ship. When

traveling with toddler twins, you often really do need double the gear. Packing up two portable cribs and two car seats, not to mention two of everything else that you'll need for your twins, can be an expensive and a heavy hassle. Instead, contact your place of lodging and see if they provide portable cribs, highchairs and other bulky items for borrowing or renting. If visiting near family or friends, see if they'd be willing to round up items for you to use during your stay. There are also a host of companies that rent baby and children's equipment (even toys!) to traveling families, making it super easy for families with twins to travel light. You'll also want to request car seats with your car rental, instead of having to drag them along, if you opt not to use them when flying.

When it comes to packing multiples of diapers, wipes, hygienic items, kid friendly foods and other consumable goods, it can often be more cost effective (not to mention less of a hassle) to purchase them once you've reached your destination, or to ship them out in advance, so they'll be ready and waiting when you arrive.

You'll also want to have a good idea about the set up of where you'll be staying. Twin proofing your temporary living quarters will be a high priority once you arrive. Be sure to gather up outlet covers, something to wind up the cords of window blinds, and cabinet locks to make your stay twin friendly. This is especially important if you're staying in a hotel that comes with a stocked mini bar. Also, opt for accommodations with readily available laundry facilities so that you can pack light and wash often.

Pack purposely

Preparing for the type of outings you'll take your twins on is also important. If you're traveling

Toddler Twin Packing List

<p>Total Number of Kids' Bags: _____</p> <p>Total Number of Diaper/Keep With You Bags: _____</p> <p>Total Number of Kids' Backpacks: _____</p> <p>Changing</p> <p>___ Diapers</p> <p>___ Wipes</p> <p>___ Changing Pad</p> <p>___ Diaper Rash Cream</p> <p>___ Zip Lock Bags</p> <p>Clothing</p> <p>___ Long Sleeved Shirts</p> <p>___ Short Sleeved Shirts</p> <p>___ Pants</p> <p>___ Shorts</p> <p>___ Onesies</p> <p>___ Sleepwear</p> <p>___ One Piece Outfits</p> <p>___ Dress Outfits</p> <p>___ Socks</p> <p>___ Shoes</p> <p>___ Tights</p> <p>___ Hats</p> <p>___ Swimwear</p> <p>___ Jacket/Sweater</p> <p>___ Snowsuit</p> <p>___ Mittens</p> <p>___ Boots</p> <p>Hygiene</p> <p>___ Hair/Body Wash</p> <p>___ Lotions</p> <p>___ Toothbrush</p> <p>___ Toothpaste</p> <p>___ Hairbrush</p>	<p>Feeding</p> <p>___ Snacks</p> <p>___ Special Foods</p> <p>___ Bottled Water</p> <p>___ Juice Boxes</p> <p>___ Kid Size Utensils</p> <p>___ Plastic Washable or Disposable Bibs</p> <p>___ Sippy Cups</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>___ Childproofing Items</p> <p>___ Night Light</p> <p>___ First Aid Kit</p> <p>___ Medicines</p> <p>___ Sun Screen</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>___ Blankets</p> <p>___ Toys</p> <p>___ Books</p> <p>___ Videos</p> <p>___ Music CDs</p> <p>___ Portable DVD Player</p> <p>___ Comfort Items</p> <p>___ Zip Lock Bags</p> <p>___ Wet Wipes</p> <p>___ Tissues</p> <p>___ Laundry Soap</p> <p>___ Bug Spray</p> <p>Gear</p> <p>___ Car Seats</p> <p>Bring Rent Borrow Ship</p> <p>___ Stroller</p> <p>Bring Rent Borrow Ship</p> <p>___ Backpack</p> <p>Bring Rent Borrow Ship</p> <p>___ Highchair</p> <p>Bring Rent Borrow Ship</p> <p>___ Cribs</p> <p>Bring Rent Borrow Ship</p>
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Ask The Nanny

Nanny - Cont'd from Pg. 13

outside the US, chances are your double stroller isn't going to maneuver well, since handicap ramps aren't always available. If you'll be doing a bit of walking, you may opt to bring backpacks to wear your twins. You may even decide that one single stroller and one backpack may work best, so you can take turns doing the carrying and pushing with your spouse. You'll also want to consider if a double stroller or two individual strollers will work best once at your destination.

When it comes to packing for twin toddlers it can be double the hassle and half of the fun. A great way to keep toddler twins occupied during air travel or long times of waiting is to pack a small sized backpack for each of your twin toddlers. Fill it with appropriate snacks, a sippy cup, books and other quiet favorite toys that will keep your twins occupied. Select toys that are easy to travel with like magnetic puzzles, cars, dolls and other items that don't have lots of easy to lose pieces. Consider the portable DVD player, as it can be a real lifesaver for parents of twins. And a word to the wise; traveling with twins is definitely not the time to worry about the effect of TV on your twin toddlers. The effect of your twins turning terror in a tightly packed space is far more likely to be harmful to everyone. Choose age appropriate videos like Scholastic's Books on DVD to entertain your toddlers while driving, flying or during times of extended waiting. You'll also want to opt for clothing that your twins can both wear. Pack basic selections that can be easily interchanged among your pair and chose clothing that provides maximum comfort and easy diaper changing access. Don't underestimate the power of plastic. Zip Lock Bags are great for storing toiletries, small toys, extra wet wipes, dirty clothes and diapers, extra clothes, snacks, wet bathing suits, and the list goes on. A gallon-sized bag can also be used as a quick changing pad if you're really desperate.

Get detailed before departure

Most importantly, when traveling with twins you'll need a detailed packing list. Having an organized list can help you spot items that you may be missing, help you remember what you've already packed and can even help you to come home with everything you've left with in the first place. So if you're looking to experience paradise when traveling with toddler twins, planning in advance and purposefully packing will definitely lead you there. ♥

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GERM PROOF TRAVEL WITH TWINS & MORE

With summer vacation just around the corner, you're probably wondering how to make sure your twins and family stays healthy during, and after, that long-planned getaway. Depending on where your travel plans take you, the risks may vary from the benign summer cold to more serious germs unique to exotic locales. Here's a 7 step guide to healthy summer travel:

By Harley A. Rotbart, M.D.

1. Immunize your kids. If your travel is domestic, the important vaccines are those required for school. They protect against serious infections that can occur year round, like meningitis, whooping cough, hepatitis A (the kind your kids can get from food contamination in U.S. restaurants as well as those abroad), mumps, chickenpox, and stomach flu (due to rotaviruses). If you're traveling abroad, the recommended school vaccines protect against those same infections, as well as diseases we see less often in the U.S., but which are still prevalent in other parts of the world – e.g. polio, tetanus, and measles. Finally, travel to certain parts of the world requires immunizations that are not required in the U.S. You should check with your local or state health department before travel to determine what special vaccine precautions are recommended for your destination.



4. Be smart around animals. From the dude ranch to the farm to petting zoos, animals can transmit lots of germs to kids. See the sidebar for important safety tips when your trip takes you near furry friends.

5. Don't drink the water – or do, depending on where you are. Traveler's diarrhea is a somewhat nastier version of the home town stomach flu. It is rare for U.S. travelers to get diarrhea from the water in Western Europe and Canada, but common in Mexico, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Although antibiotics taken before departure are effective in reducing the occurrence of traveler's diarrhea, they are not recommended because of the side effects and the potential for overuse of these medicines. Effective prevention strategies include drinking only bottled water, avoiding ice or raw fruits and vegetables, and eating foods that have been cooked to high temperature while still hot.



2. Wash their hands. Whether your kids are at home or on the road, hand washing is the single most effective strategy in reducing the spread of infections. Kids typically spend less than 5 seconds washing and leave the sink with their hands dripping wet. A 20-30 second wash and thorough drying will reduce the germ load by as much as a 1000-fold. Simple soap and water work just fine, but sinks can be hard

to find when you're on the road. Alcohol wipes and rubs kill germs very effectively and are "self-drying", making them ideal for your purse and the glove box in the car. Hand washing moments on trips include anytime there is contact with lots of people or with inanimate objects that lots of people handle – e.g. the security and customs lines at airports, the baggage claim carousel, tour buses and taxi cabs, public restrooms, etc.

3. Use bug spray and do "tick checks". Mosquitoes and ticks continue to be the most common U.S. vectors for diseases like encephalitis, Lyme disease, and tick fevers but simple preventive measures can reduce their impact. When possible, kids should wear long sleeves and long pants on camping trips and hikes in the woods. DEET-containing bug spray has been extensively studied and proven to be both effective and safe if used correctly. See the sidebar for safe use of DEET. When your kids come in to the tent or cabin or hotel for the night, do head-to-toe checks for ticks and carefully remove any that have attached.

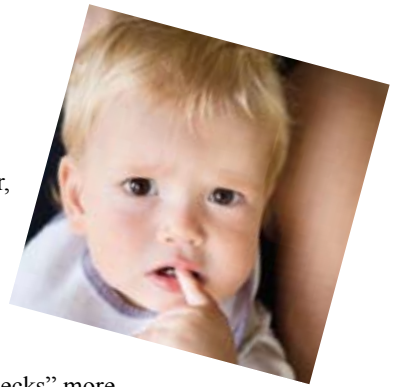


6. Keep kids' hands off the floor of the airplane. The recycling of airplane air makes

Cont'd on Pg. 16

Germ - Cont'd from Pg. 15

germs that normally are not readily spread through the air more transmissible. The top to bottom laminar flow of air in the cabin actually reduces the spread of germs from row to row, but forces airborne germs to the floor of the craft. If your kids don't crawl on the floor, they will have less exposure to the circulating germs; if they do crawl, use alcohol wipes to clean their hands before hands go to mouth.



7. Be cabin cautious. Cabins in the woods pose several unique risks. Bats, rodents, and ticks all like the shelter. Kids need to be warned to stay away from droppings of all sorts on the floor or on ceiling beams, and to never handle a dead animal. Perform "tick checks" more frequently when staying in a cabin. ❤️

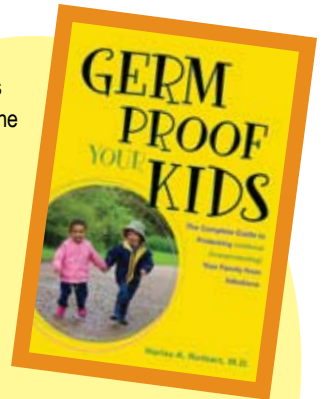
Ten Tips for Keeping Animal Germs Away From your Kids

- Don't carry food, drinking water, pacifiers, and sippy cups into animal areas; no thumb sucking until hands can be thoroughly washed.
- Don't let your kids touch the animals' food or water; kids should only feed animals with feed provided from a container with which the animals have not had contact.
- Don't let your kids touch animal waste or soiled animal bedding.
- Thoroughly wash your kids hands (and your own) after leaving animal areas; carry disposable alcohol hand sanitizer wipes if you can't be certain that hand washing facilities are provided.
- The gates, pens, and all other areas near where animals are kept are contaminated with animal germs – treat these areas as if they are the animals themselves, and wash after contact.
- Only eat or drink snacks in areas far removed from the animals, and only after thoroughly washing hands.
- Don't let your kids put their hands in animals' mouths; feeding animals from an open hand must be carefully supervised to prevent bites.
- Kids should have no contact with animal birthing or newly born animals that have not been thoroughly cleaned.
- Don't let your kids drink unpasteurized milk or eat unpasteurized dairy products that may be served at the exhibit.
- Bring bottled water in case you can't be sure of the quality of the water supply at the exhibit.



Harley A. Rotbart, MD, is a pediatric infectious disease specialist at The Children's Hospital of Denver, and Professor and Vice Chairman of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

He is author of the newly published book, *Germ Proof Your Kids—The Complete Guide to Protecting (without Overprotecting) Your Family from Infections* (ASM Press, 2008), from which this article is excerpted. Find out more about Dr. Rotbart and his book at www.germproofyourkids.com and visit his GERMBlog™, an up-to-the-minute source for important new developments in protecting your kids.



10 Rules for Safe and Effective Use of DEET Bug Spray:

- The higher the concentration of DEET in the spray or lotion, the longer lasting the mosquito protection.
- Products containing 10% DEET protect for about 2 hours; products with 24% DEET protect for 5 hours. The highest concentration of DEET approved for use in kids is 30%.
- Use at the lowest concentration appropriate for the desired amount of protection.
- Only apply on children once per day.
- Don't use on infants younger than 2 months old.
- Don't apply over cuts or wounds.
- Thoroughly wash the skin when coming indoors.
- Don't apply the products near kids' eyes and mouths or to kids' hands. Apply the spray or lotion to your own hands first, and then rub it onto your child's skin.
- Don't use repellent to treat skin that is covered by clothing.
- Don't use combination products of DEET and sunscreen, but separate DEET and sunscreen products can (and should) be used simultaneously.

The Quadfather's Trip-Tested Tips to Twin Travel and Beyond

By Mike Poff

Traveling with kids is a scary idea. For the average American multi-family, the thought might even seem out of the question. The chant of "are we there yet?" stirs such a nervous chuckle in parents that we even have a series of movies built around that title. Nevertheless, breathe deeply, embrace hope and put down the panic button as I share The Quadfathers trip tested tips to twin travel and beyond.

First, you need to have a purpose behind your choice of destination or destinations. Access the ages and interests of your crew, including you and your mate. Two year olds will probably get little from a trip to Gettysburg National Park, yet a tour of Hershey Park they might find most sweet. If you have mixed ages like a fifth-grader that just finished studying the Civil War and some toddler triplets, this little Pennsylvania get away might be just right for you.

Solicit ideas; look for central locations that afford day trips to meet different inclinations. Bundle your trip, think 'multi' and do not be static and single-minded. Seeing the grand folks for a day or two and moving on has many advantages and appeals. Make sure your plan suits you and your family and not others expectations of you and your family.

Secondly, choose a season and book well in advance. Resort areas have busy seasons and not so busy seasons. If you are planning your travel at high traffic times set up your dates as close to a year or more in advance (if possible). If you want to save money, travel off-season but still book in advance. The trick is in matching your likes and time frame to their off times and amenities.



Last year we took a great trip by customized van to Maine in the summer. Now consider we start in Virginia and have seven kids and you will understand why our van is customized. We stayed at a top-flight resort near the New Hampshire border that you could not get close to when the ski-slopes are running. We enjoyed full amenities, a full staff and maybe a dozen families were there at this time of year.

We day tripped to Bar Harbor where we chased whales and ate lobsters. We went to a State Animal Refuge and saw elk, moose, mountain lions and several birds of prey. No crowds anywhere and the folks were glad to see us there.

Compare that to a two-hour line for the "Death Coaster" in 90-degree heat with wilting twins in tow and take note. Think out of the box and you will not be caught in one.

Cont'd on Pg. 21

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Outnumbered! Taking Toddler Twins Out & About

By Shawn Ledington

Getting out and about with multiple toddlers can be challenging, but Jean Springer of Michigan was not about to let her twin daughters stop her. In fact, she said, she was determined to resume her normal activities, which includes shopping. “From the time I was given the go ahead from my doctors, I took the girls out on my own,” Springer said. “And we go places often. It’s not that I was trying to show the world that I could manage, but I had no fear to begin with.” This does not mean, though, that it hasn’t been a little tough, at times.

Prepare, prepare, prepare

In fact, going anywhere with multiple toddlers requires a great deal of preparation, said Elizabeth Lyons, author of, “Ready or Not, There we go: The REAL Experts’ Guide to the Toddler Years with Twins.” (and a regular contributor of TWINS™ Magazine) Lyons recommends that any parent of multiples have very low expectations when their kids are under the age of three. “This sounds negative, but it isn’t,” she said. “It’s realistic. Some outings and some days will be easier than others.” Parents should not give up, though, she said. Parents need to put on a brave face and press onward, especially when the child is not in any danger, Lyons said. “It is important to not let meltdowns stop you,” she said. Also, try not to worry about what other people think. “If your kids do have a fit, remind yourself that all mothers go through this,” she said.

Seek out safe places

Finding the right play date destination so you feel comfortable and relaxed for your family is essential, Lyons said. Families should search for the playgrounds that are well-contained and sit far from the road. A fenced park is best. These measures help limit the number of directions toddlers can run and allow for easier visibility. Special classes for toddlers such as story time at the library and Gymboree can be safe places to let toddlers run without fearing their safety. The hard part, of course, is managing and navigating the parking lots. Teach toddlers to hold the tires of the car while buckling them into their car seats.

Make rules, and stick to them

But, for Kate Gosselin, mother of 4-year-old sextuplets and 7-year-old twins and star of The Learning Channel’s “Jon and Kate Plus 8,” most parks are not suited for one parent and six toddlers. For the first two years, she hardly left the house, she said. Now, she and Jon do attempt outings more regularly, but not without a ton of preparation and rules. Gosselin’s first rule is that no one can get out of the grocery cart for any reason at any time. The older girls walk beside the carts. The day of the outing, she has tasks she has to do and her husband has another set of tasks. This means one might be caring for the kids while the other makes breakfast. One might be dressing the kids, while the other gets

lunches together. “It works for us,” Gosselin said. Once at their destination, all the kids wear clothing that sets them apart from each other, but also from the rest of the crowd, she said. The Gosselin’s bring along potty chairs to avoid having to use public restrooms as much as possible, too.

Make it fun, but set boundaries

Springer, of Macomb, Michigan, said her daughters Audrey and Maggie, now two, have always been out and about and the result is that they are pretty good at listening and understanding the boundaries their mother has set. “I never go anywhere without a stroller,” she said, adding that she’s never used harnesses. She’s also used music – turning a song on and off – to teach them the word freeze so they know to stop – a great tool to use when one of her daughters starts wandering off too far. “And, lately, I’ve been brave and gone into a couple of clothing stores with the girls walking along side of me,” Springer said. “They know the rule is to hold hands at all times and they’ve learned to hold each other’s hand, which is a sight to behold. It takes a bit longer but it gives them a sense of their own independence, I think.” And, while she’s hardly ever used another relative to help her in her travels, Springer admits she would never do the doctor’s office by herself. “I never go on my own,” she said. “I tried it once and it was a disaster. Why put the girls and myself through needless suffering, especially during a traumatic appointment?”

Be cautious, but fearless

Parents of multiples have to constantly walk the fine line of being adventurous and living, all while being cautious and safe with toddlers in tow. But, with the right preparation and with lots of ‘worse case scenarios’ that are spinning through our minds, getting out and about with multiple toddlers does get easier with time... at least a little bit. ♥

Shawn Ledington Fink is a freelance writer based in Central Pennsylvania. Her 2-year-old twins still scare her, and impress her at the same time. She recently led her twin daughters on an adventure up a mall escalator after only three tries and while being spotted by a lovely Sears employee willing to grab a child, if necessary. She has also written for FitPregnancy, Pregnancy, and Blueprints.



Ten Steps Every Parent Should Know: The Basics of Raising a Happy Toddler

1. **It helps to think of your toddler as sort of a...cave-man.** With all their grunting and grabbing toddlers often seem quite primitive. In fact, as amazing as it sounds, developmentally they are almost identical to little Neanderthals! Between one and four years of age your talented child will zip through five major achievements that it took prehistoric cavemen (and women) the past five million years to accomplish: walking, talking, manipulating things with the hands, figuring things out, and forming friendships.
2. **Be an "ambassador" to your prehistoric little child.** Once you realize your toddler has a lot in common with a Stone Ager (especially when she's mad), it becomes clear that your job is trickier than just being a "parent." You are an ambassador from the 21st Century to the Neanderthal people! And as a great ambassador you must guide your child with respect and love; being neither too pushy or a mushy pushover.
3. **Follow the Fast Food Rule.** This rule is simple: When your child is upset you should take a lesson from the order-takers at a burger joint - always repeat back his "order" (what he wants) before you tell him your "price" (what you want). Toddlers in the middle of a meltdown are incapable of hearing our message (our reasons, reassurance, distraction or warning) until they're sure we understand and respect their message. So when your tot is upset, before you mention your ideas, take a minute to sincerely describe what he's doing and how you think he feels.
4. **Speak Toddler-ese.** Toddlers are pretty immature to begin with but they get downright primitive when they're upset. So, when you're talking to your cranky little cave girl, always translate your words into Toddler-ese (her basic, almost prehistoric language). You can translate anything into Toddler-ese simply by using:
 - Short phrases.
 - Tons of repetition.
 - A passionate tone of voice.
 - Lots of exaggerated facial expressions and body gestures (like big smiles, frowns and vigorous pointing).
5. **Know your toddler's temperament.** Although all toddlers go through the same phases of development, they each have a unique way of approaching the world. Is your child easy? Cautious? Spirited? Knowing whom you're dealing with can help you tweak your parenting tactics so they work best for your toddler.
6. **Keep your cool.** Just because your prehistoric little pal goes ballistic doesn't mean you should too.
7. **Encourage good behavior with "respect and rewards."** These gifts are guaranteed to bring out your toddler's best behavior:
 - Respect:
 - Believable praise
 - Side-door
 - Confidence
 - Encouraging patience
 - Rewards
8. **Rely on lots of Time-in.** Time-ins are little tidbits of attention and routine that helps your toddler feel valued.
9. **Use gentle discipline to steer your child's behavior in a better direction ("detours").** Your toddler's job is to push the limits; your job is to enforce them.
10. **Don't be afraid to use punishments as needed ("road-blocks").** When detours don't work to keep your child from misbehaving, it may be time to use a toddler-appropriate punishment. ♡

Source: *The Happiest Toddler on the Block* by Dr. Harvey Karp



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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.

“Values are those things that motivate our actions and even our behaviors.”



Dear Tom,
Three months ago I gave birth for the first time to two incredible and healthy baby girls and I feel truly blessed. As much as I am embracing and loving my new role as mom I am struggling with regaining my previous levels of confidence in other areas of my life. I guess it's not a big deal except for the fact that I am planning on going back to work in less than three months and feeling a little overwhelmed by the prospect, any suggestions? ~ Angie, Thornton Colorado



First let me say congratulations. As much as I admire your desire to be and do it all, what I am really hearing is a fear that you can't. Three months from now you may or may not be going back to work but right now you are "anticipating" the possibility that it could be a real challenge based on your new and added responsibilities as a mom of twins. Perhaps you are fearful you can't do both? Keep in mind that fear and trepidation are nothing more than the anticipation of pain. Do you think it might be somewhat normal to feel that way? In my experience, and keep in mind I have never had a baby much less twins, it would be pretty unusual if you didn't have some of those doubts and fears. My suggestion might be as simple as allowing yourself to be in this moment and to let the future work itself out. You are in the midst of something absolutely extraordinary and you owe it to yourself and your new family to embrace the change and the opportunity to grow with all your heart and soul. But let's explore your confidence issue a little further.

Your thoughts and fears about the future are likely based on the values hierarchy you have been living over the past several years as a working woman and not as a mom. Values are those things that motivate our actions and even our behaviors. The hierarchy of those values will occasionally shift based on the urgency of what's going on in our lives. For example, someone who suddenly feels a sense of urgency about their weight or health will find time for exercise or to start a diet even though they swore there wasn't any time in their life for those things just a day or two before. That is a values shift.

As another example, have you ever gotten a little upset at someone or something for disrupting your plans to go to the gym, meet a friend for dinner, or go shopping even though the reason for the disruption was in itself important? Sure you have, we all have. I remember a few years ago when I was in training for a competition and I would sit on the couch at the end of every night and write in my nutrition journal. It would not only give me an opportunity to track all my nutrition and training specifics but it also allowed me to mentally refocus on creating my "inner game" for success. Now if you can imagine my wife at the time felt as if those evenings would have been better spent sharing our time together rather than my focusing on something a thousand miles away. Although our sharing intimate time together was also near the top of my values list...at that moment it was a distant second or even third. Today of course, I realize how selfish that was of me but at the time any interruption of my number one value (winning) was an inconvenience at best. That temporary shift in values not only created some internal conflict, as well as a drop in confidence, but also a serious conflict with my relationship.

You have been living based on a certain set of values for several years and those values are now being challenged even turned on their head. When that happens it's usually accompanied by some turmoil and conflict and quite often a ripple in confidence and sometimes even a complete confidence breakdown.

Eliminating or reducing the negative impact of a values conflict can often be achieved by gaining some understanding and clarity. Ask yourself what's most important to you right at this moment. What will make the greatest difference and have the most impact on your life over the next 1-3 years? I even recommend you write down your top 5 or 10 life values and then sort them in order of priority. I'm confident that once you are clear on what's really important and are in line with your new prioritized values you will have much more confidence in yourself and your decisions about the future. ♥



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

Have a budget. Trekking about maxing out your credit cards is not good preparation for having two, three, four or more in college at the same time. Off-season travel and advance booking can help but you need to have a grasp of your expected yearly travel expenditures.

If on average you take three or more trips a year or spend more than three thousand dollars on them, you might consider what is widely called "vacation ownership". If your numbers are under these per annum this may not be a savings for you. If you and your squad are spenders and full of wanderlust, I still suggest you entertain spending well less than half your expected travel expenditure for a period with which you are comfortable.

This is all very similar to time-shares and other programs with your weeks traded for trips to different resorts. You buy X number of weeks at location Z and they can be traded for weeks all around the world. This is a flat fee transaction with the weeks spread over a set period. Three, five and ten years are common. Once enrolled in a 'club' you will be able to book a full-week at resorts at much less than their cost per day. Your transaction charge should be well under \$200.00 per week.

A couple of suggestions: negotiate furiously; buy at highly desirable locations with the fewest off-season days. Examples might be Hawaii, the Mexican Rivera, Cabo San Lucas or similar areas. Also, buy at the largest number of bedrooms you can. These factors greatly enhance your trading power to other resorts. Still you should book a year or more in advance to get the best pick for your transfer.

Finally, consider your modes of travel. Remember our van? It is set up with two screens for movies. One screen can accommodate a video game input so play and popcorn can flow together. Add the satellite radio and head phones so moviegoers and gamers do not have to listen to mom and pops golden oldies and the Poff troop can roll as far as little bladders allow. We consider everything on our side of the Mississippi River to be fair game for the wonder-bus and us.

Still some locations require air travel, which can nearly double the cost of most trips if you have multi-travelers. Once there you will need transportation unless your final destination is all-inclusive. Flying and car rental is expensive. Again, you can save out of season and by advance booking. Still I like having a wonder-bus and keeping the options more in hand. Investing in a sturdy, dependable multi-family-mobile might pay off for you too.

Take into account; cost, location, appeal, age appropriateness, transportation to and upon arrival mixed with entertainment in route. This leaves little to get in the way of taking marvelous multi family trips and making great multi-family memories. Of course, the "Are we there yet?" thing might still emerge. However, those headphones I mentioned work just as well on adults as on the children. Bottom-line; do not think in that box! ♥

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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Elizabeth Lyons is the author of *Ready or Not... Here We Come!* and *Ready or Not... There we Go!*, humorous guides to the first year and toddler years with twins. Visit her website at www.elizabethlyons.com

“When traveling with multiples, as with all things in this wild, wonderful world of parenting, the positive comes with the not-so-positive. And we must be flexible enough to change our approach accordingly.”

Most of us have seen “European Vacation” wherein Clark Griswold and his family endlessly circle these two British landmarks because Clark simply, “Can’t get left.”

I understand Clark’s pain. When my family travels, we can’t get left either. Or right. Or seated in the vehicle without squabbles over who’s touching whom. Or out of the neighborhood before all four kids are asking, “Are we there yet?”

Traveling with multiples is an interesting proposition no matter their age. My husband and I suffered through a 14-hour drive to my parents’ house when our twins were one and their sister was three. We were clinically insane upon arrival.

The next year, we endured a 3-hour flight to Florida. That didn’t go terribly well either. Twenty-eight minutes after takeoff, a woman seated in front of us asked her husband (loudly) how long he thought it would be before we’d spike our sons’ sippy cups with Benadryl.

When the boys were four (and their siblings were six and one), we stomachached a five-hour flight to Arizona. When I agreed to move to this wonderful land of cacti whose needles apparently jump and rattlesnakes that have been found sunning themselves on people’s back patios, my main stipulation was that the move would not involve a three-day drive with four kids in the backseat. Now, that flight went quite well (or maybe it was the fact that I sat in the front of the plane with whichever kid was in a good mood

while my groom squirmed in the back with the others).

When traveling with multiples, as with all things in this wild, wonderful world of parenting, the positive comes with the not-so-positive. And we must be flexible enough to change our approach accordingly.

When I used to travel (alone), I made sure I had my driver’s license and my wallet. Any other forgotten necessities could be purchased en route. Those requirements have changed. I now require ear plugs, my iPod, Tylenol, and a nice supply of napkins. The fact is... I just might need these items before we arrive at an establishment where they can be purchased.

Years ago, while driving down the road with between four and six different disagreements simultaneously occurring behind me, I’d respectfully request in a sort of sing-song I’m-following-the-directions-of-the-latest-parenting-expert-to-come-onto-the-scene voice, “I have a problem. I can’t concentrate,” or “I hear that you’re frustrated. Please use a quieter voice.” Today, I no longer have the energy. I simply (and not so quietly at times) request, “Zip it!”

I believe in having low expectations when traveling with multiples. Not because it’s pessimistic; because it’s realistic. When you plan for the worst, you’re almost always pleasantly surprised in one way or another, which is far better than being unpleasantly surprised at each turn.

A classic episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* comes to mind. When Raymond’s brother, Robert, married Amy the entire affair was a disaster. Raymond’s toast focused on the importance of editing. You remember the good stuff.

For instance, the times we’ve listened to the kids planning their vacation escapades in the backseat (without touching each other in ways that began World War 3). Or the day we watched them play on the beach for hours in matching tiny toddler bathing suits, working together to fill a bucket with sand. When they were five, I spent the afternoon happily reading on the sand while the boys flung rocks the size of quarters into a lake the size of Kansas, sure that if they only did it long enough (and “crapperated,” said Henry), they could turn the lake into a mountain.

For the sake of balance, it’s critical to focus on the miracles: the moments when everyone sat quietly on the plane, the instance when someone apologized without being prompted, the nights they drifted off to sleep giggling over the word “underwear.”

We must have selective amnesia. In hindsight, regardless of who threw up (because someone always does), who was



up all night screaming (ditto), and how many negotiations (read: bribes) you had to utter to elicit compliance from your contingent, the good memories are the gems—the peas hiding within an extremely tall pile of mattresses, if you will.

They make us smile. And more importantly, much more importantly: they are what make us crazy enough to once again pack up the car and head out on another adventure. ♡

Mailbox - Cont'd from Pg. 9

I cannot tell you how excited I was to receive my March/April edition of TWINS™ and see your boys on the cover! As the mother of 14-month-old fraternal girls that barely look like siblings, much yet what people assume all same-sex twins look like (identical), it was refreshing. I cannot count the number of times I have been asked if my girls were twins then followed by the comment “she looks bigger” or “they don’t look alike.” Or family and friends that say to my husband and myself, “you each have a baby.” I constantly feel as if I have to explain to complete strangers the difference in identical and fraternal twinning. Not to mention the GI/feeding issues we had that caused a weight difference between the girls ♡ again, I just want to thank you for



spotlighting your adorable boys. ~ Blessings, Jennifer Flinn, Spring, TX

(Editor’s Note: Thanks so much for your email. That meant so much to me, as I do appreciate hearing positive feedback from readers like you. I know how you feel, we ALWAYS get people saying, they don’t even look like brothers –ouch! It also bothers me that just because they do look so different people don’t really think their twin bond is as strong. I can attest that they are

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

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

\$13.95

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POSTCARDS FROM THE WORLD

Cruising with Twins — I Dream of Disney



By Wendy Irvine

In my wildest dreams, I never imagined that I'd visit Disney World and cruise the Caribbean with Hook and friends and, with two four-year-olds, no less. But then, in my wildest dreams I never imagined that I'd get to have twins (I say "get to have": the baby years were another story). As twin mommies know, life can be funny in a really wonderful (often sleep-deprived) way. My sweet, but cheapskate husband wasn't sold on the idea of traveling with our two and hesitated when he first heard about the trip. That was all I needed. I sprinted over his hesitation and cried, "You want to go too! I can see it in your eyes!" Poor guy didn't stand a chance.

As luck would have it, we'd spend a couple of days at Disney World before boarding the cruise at an ideal time to visit: October (September rocks too) since kids are all in school and the lines non-existent. I won't bore you with a slide show, but in case you're wishing upon a star, let me share a little about this incredible trip — with a travel tip or two sprinkled in for good measure.

In the first leg, there was no sleep (like having twins) — We took the red-eye from California to Orlando and arrived at 4:00 a.m. our time. We landed wiped out, but excited. Tip: We booked a room for the prior night so when we arrived we could slip right into an awaiting bed. Costly? Totally, but the shower alone was worth it.

First two days: After naps, we headed for the Magic Kingdom. My mommy brain, diluted by the excitement, made a rookie error and took my boys, Matt and Josh, on Space Mountain for their maiden Disney ride. Stunned and leery of me after my whoops, my boys rebounded beautifully. **Tip: Disney strollers are to-die-for and any kind of a stroller is a must.**

Three days later: We boarded a cushy bus bound for Port Canaveral ("Where I Dream of Jeannie lives?" I asked. My husband rolled his eyes) to board the Disney Magic. There was so much to see: pools, restaurants, and a sparkling ocean. What did my boys want to do? Play in the cabin's closet. They were enthralled by the bunk bed, the closet (ideal for their flashlights) and the two bathrooms — hundreds of dollars for a closet? Yet another reminder that little boys need only sand, closets, flashlights and bugs to be content. Sticks are acceptable too.

Did I say two bathrooms? I did. And most of the Disney cabins boast split bathrooms. One gleams with tub, shower and sink. The other with sink and toilet. (Somebody at Disney must be a mommy.) We soon realized that we'd be eating in digs that looked suspiciously like fine dining, with four-year-olds in tow. This was bad. Cautiously we approached our table to meet the other poor saps who would be tolerating tantrums with us every evening for a week. Thankfully (with a capital T), the couple had two boys as well. They looked at us. We looked at them and knew we'd found our people. (Turned out one of Carolyn's boys would only wear pajamas to dinner. Mine fell asleep with their head in the plates, but at least they were wearing street clothes. Score one for our family. Sorry Carolyn.)

Mid-voyage: The days were uneventful in an incredible way. One of the bigger surprises was seeing the boys marvel at the Broadway-style shows where Disney characters come to life.

As for me, I was feeling the love as they say. Not a single "mom" duty in sight, a ship bursting with entertainment for everyone, food to wow even my fussiest, blue ribbon play care and wonderful adult spots like a fabulous workout room and spa. A Disney cruise is mommy-nirvana. There's wasn't a thing to do except soak up uninterrupted time with my family. And then real life, or should I say, real boys caught up with us.

Early Wednesday Morning: While I was eating breakfast with Josh upstairs, Matt fell out of his bunk bed head first. After visiting the ship's doctor (a total professional) Matt and I boarded an ambulance with a Disney staff member (also awesome) for the CAT scan/Mexican hospital excursion. I don't recommend it. The good news: Matt was fine and still talks about his ambulance ride. **Tip: insist on a full railing around the entire top bunk.**

Next Day: The ship docked at Disney's private island: Cataway Cay. Beaches, bikes, snorkeling, you name it and it even had stingrays? Yes! We sat in on a mini stingrays 101 class and then fed and hung out with some rays that were tame and stinger-less, it was thrilling.

One of our last days: I, escorting Matt and Josh to tea with Alice in Wonderland (some voyages host a tea with Wendy) glanced over just as Cinderella, Snow White and Ariel made a royal entrance from the second floor to the ship's sumptuous lobby beneath. "Look!" I shouted. "The princesses are coming down the staircase!" Fumbling for my camera, shivers flying up my arm, I thought, "This is ridiculous, how old am I?" But I was hooked. I had become a Cinderella groupie.

Months Later: Friends ask if I'd recommend the cruise. Without even a millisecond's hesitation, I answer, "There's no other way to be a princess for an entire week. I know you want to go — I can see it in your eyes!"

Want to check out the latest on Disney's '08 California summer only cruises and their regular cruises sailing out of Florida? Get all of your questions answered at: www.disneycruise.disney.go.com. ♡



Happy Sailing!

Our Journey Down-Under

Cathy Fuimaono-Osmundson

"Mom, people say you have an accent, but we can't hear it" my twin daughters, Leilani and Lina, said to me. "You don't realize I do?" I answered. "The way I speak is no different to you, but one day I'll take you both to where all three of us were born, New Zealand, and then you'll hear what everyone else does." In March 2007, I got my wish. My nine-year-old twins and I returned to our birthplace and added a four-day stopover in Brisbane, Australia. Here's a bit of our adventure...

March 7th – We began our journey in San Francisco and we slept on and off during the 14-hour overnight flight to Auckland.

March 9th – We skipped March 8th altogether when we crossed the International Dateline so when I woke Lina and Leilani up (fantastic travelers) to show them the two islands that make up New Zealand. They couldn't believe they were able to see the entire country.

March 10th – The girls fit in so well with my family; it's as though they never even left! The weather is beautiful – one of the reasons I chose to travel to New Zealand during autumn. We walked five minutes to the wharf near my parent's home. The girls had never seen a cargo ship as big as the one docked at bay. We walked upon rocks, picked up seashells, and played in the sand. They said to me, "Mama, why did you leave?"

March 11th – We hiked up to what was once called One Tree Hill but is now called "No Tree Hill" since the 125-year-old pine tree that stood there had been removed. It felt wonderful to show the girls a very special place on the grounds - the gazebo where their father and I were married.

March 12th – Today we drove to Rotorua, a city located four hours away from Auckland. The countryside is beautiful with rolling hills and sheep. We stopped at a chocolate factory so the girls could buy their favorite New Zealand candy (Pineapple Lumps, small square-shaped chewy candies, and Minties, also chewy and square).

March 13th – Last night we watched a cultural show performed by the native people of New Zealand, the Maori people, and feasted on food cooked by the steam of hot rocks in an earth oven called a hangi. We ate chicken, pork, beef, sweet potato (kumara), carrots, corn, and potatoes. All were delicious and flavorful. The girls gobbled everything! They were fascinated with the cultural show too. The men had tattoos on their faces and danced around like fierce warriors. The women, who also had tattoos but only around their mouths, danced gracefully and swung pois – white balls tied to a long cord.

March 14th - We visited Waitomo Caves today. We walked through deep caverns and rode a boat through a section called the Glowworm Grotto, named for the thousands of larvae attached to the ceiling that produce

a luminescent light to attract food. It felt as though we were underneath a blanket of twinkling stars.

March 15th – We're back in Auckland. We caught the bus into the city and rode to the top of the Sky Tower (950 feet high) so the girls could take a look at Auckland in its entirety. The view was spectacular in every direction. We saw high-rise buildings, boats dotting the harbor, bridges, and mountains. Afterwards, we walked downtown to the wharf and took a 35-minute ferry ride to Waiheke Island, but we didn't have enough time, however, to tour Waiheke and all that it has to offer.

March 16th – Today we took in the Museum of Natural History. The girls absorbed everything they possibly could. They especially loved walking into a Marae, a Maori meeting house with its beautiful carvings and design. We followed up our history lesson with a stroll through the botanical gardens.

March 17th – For our last day in Auckland, Lina visited her cousin's elementary school and met her cousin's classmates. Leilani and I shopped at a couple of different malls for last-minute gifts. Thirty people attended a family barbeque held in honor of our farewell.

March 18th – After an emotional goodbye to family and friends, we flew to Brisbane, Australia, a three hour plane ride away. As the plane descended, my mouth dropped at the sight of miles of sand and turquoise water crashing against the shore. The girls squealed!

March 19th – We slept all day yesterday since we were so tired! We watched a cousin's rugby game this morning, and then drove to the Gold Coast, an hour's drive from Brisbane. It's so hot! We spent the day at Dreamworld – a theme park. We rode every ride available to us, but the highlight of the day was getting to hold real koala bears. Lina and Leilani held a four-year old koala named Beaumont, and I cuddled a 14-month-old baby koala named Whiskey. We also fed wallabies and saw some other Australian animals like wombats, dingos, and kangaroos.

March 20th – It's so hot that we decided to cool down and spend the day at Australia's largest water park, Wet n' Wild Water World. Tonight we'll enjoy another farewell barbeque by the hotel pool.

March 21st – We flew back to America via a two hour layover in Sydney. It has been a whirlwind of a trip but one we would do again in a heartbeat. On the flight home, I asked the girls if they heard through other New Zealanders what I sound like. "Yes we did mom," they replied and added, "Why can't we have an accent like yours?" "You can," I answered. "We'll have to return 'down-under' more often so you can practice!" ♥

Cathy Fuimaono-Osmundson is a freelance writer and lives outside of Denver, Colorado with her husband John and their 10-year-old twins, Lina & Leilani





Lesson #1: Book a direct flight.

By the time we landed in San Francisco, the kids were ready to get up and move. But looking at what had become “base camp” in the back of the plane, I had doubts about our ability to make our connecting flight. My husband, Mike, and I needed to rally the troops: “Turn off the Game Boys. Check under your seats. Sort your crayons later. Who’s in the bathroom? Count heads. Let’s go!”

Stepping into the terminal swarming with travelers, my first thought was, “Toto, we’re not in Kansas anymore.” Mike led the charge with double his share of carry-ons, and a hand on each twin. The older kids followed single file, and I took up the rear

My biggest fear was that we’d lose somebody. Never mind we were traveling only one state away. From our front door in Portland, Oregon to the three-room cottage in Lahaina Hawaii, we’d fly 3000 miles, travel 10 hours, walk through four airports, and switch planes twice. Our oldest kids, ages 10 and 12 could hold their own. It was the three-year-old twin boys who needed tracking devices. I was certain it would be a trip for the memory books, so long as we came home with all that we left with – two adults, six kids, and 12 carry-ons. We planned every step. We’d arrive at the Portland airport at 4:00 a.m. for our morning flight to San Francisco, where we’d switch planes, fly six hours to Honolulu, catch the wiki-wiki shuttle (that means quick! quick!) to switch planes again, then land in Maui, pick up our rental car and drive to our hotel.

Easy enough and the kids would sleep the whole way, anyway, right? Still, I packed Plan B: a gym bag crammed with everything a kid could want while strapped to a 747 (everything short of a play structure and badminton set). We had books, crayons, music players, Play-Doh, Game Boys, watercolors, and snacks. And in case those failed to entertain, we booked our seats near the back of the plane where easy access to the bathroom would provide hours of hand-washing fun. We thought we had planned for every contingency, but three things we learned along the way:

carrying the baby and the diaper bag. When we spotted the moving sidewalk, which lead straight to our gate, I thought, “Sweet relief.” But just as we stepped aboard, Mike promptly forgot an important rule when traveling with twins: NEVER LET GO! Fascinated by the moving floor, and free from dad’s grip they took off. They chased each other down the corridor, treating travelers like an obstacle course. Mike and I were unable to catch up. All we could do was watch as the twins reached the end of the moving sidewalk, stopped, then turned around and tried to run back to us, which was a bad idea. Running the wrong direction on a conveyer belt can be hazardous. One false step and . . . smack! Christopher tripped, landed face first on the treaded walkway, and erupted in screams. By the time we reached him, his lip was cut and bleeding and Randy looked on in horror. We bandaged his face and breathed a sigh of relief; at least we didn’t lose somebody.

Lesson #2: Remember familiar routines.

Three days into our three-week vacation, the twins declared they were done. “Dad,” Randy hollered from the back seat. “Drive this van to our house.” “You want to go back to the hotel?” Mike asked. “No, I want to go to home!” Our oldest daughter, Jessica, explained the situation, “We can’t drive home over the ocean. We have to take the airplane.” That did it. Randy and Christopher flung their arms around each other and wailed, “We miss our house!” Mike and I looked at each other. The twins were having a good time, but we had packed a lot into our first three days. That night we came up with a plan. The twins needed familiarity; a day more like home. So the next day we rented a DVD player and the twins’ favorite movies; we made peanut butter sandwich-

To Maui and Back with Twins

By Jenn Dahl



es and macaroni and cheese; and we stayed in the cottage and played Candy Land – just like home. Over the next few days we gradually reintroduced Maui to the twins. We took short walks to the beach instead of driving an hour to go snorkeling. We had picnics in the yard, and chased geckos, foregoing luaus and surfing lessons. Eventually we did all the sightseeing we wanted to do, but we did them at a pace manageable for two 3-year-olds.

Lesson #3: Bring an empty suitcase.

When it came time to pack for home, it seemed our suitcases had shrunk. We hadn't purchased many souvenirs, but each kid had a few. Plus they all bought flip-flops, t-shirts, and leis. And then there were the rocks. The twins had collected pocketfuls of rocks and shells from every beach we visited, and all were too precious to leave behind. We shifted items from one suitcase to another, but it was no use; we'd have to ship a box home. Then 10-year-old Jason spoke up, "Dad, I want to keep my surfboard." Make that a very large box.

Our first big family vacation was a success. We came home with suntans, pictures, and fond memories of family togetherness. Our oldest two learned to surf, and six-year old, Lesanna, made an A-B-C memory book of Hawaii ("H" is for "hula girl"). But perhaps



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sample of 2-page spread

the most amazing part; we left with six kids, and upon our return discovered we were expecting child number seven. And I was afraid we might lose somebody! ♥

Jennifer Dahlen is a freelance writer and mother of seven, including twin boys born in 1997. She resides with her husband and children in Portland, Oregon.

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Flying into a New with Identical Tw

Where one went, the other followed.

When Rodd Rickenbach was digging in the dirt in the front yard of the sprawling ranch in eastern Wyoming, Todd Rickenbach was a few feet away, playing with trucks in the small canals filled with water. When Todd rode his dirt bikes on the ranch, Rodd was there motoring behind him. "You could always count on someone there to entertain you," Rodd said. "That's something you take for granted until you get to be older. You realize that not every kid has that luxury." So it seems natural that a few years ago, Todd turned in his captain's chair during a Frontier Airlines flight and found his twin brother, Rodd, in the co-pilot's seat. The two, at one time, didn't want to work for the same airline. But throughout their lives, where one went, the other eventually followed. They were fortunate to have their identical other when they grew up on the ranch in Wyoming. It was wide-open, which was great in the summer, when their mother would send them out the door and forget about them until dinner. They had horses and dirt bikes and lots of mud and grass and open space. In the winter, it was heaven, when they had sledding and ice skating on the ranch's shallow pond and hunting for Christmas trees. But they didn't have many other kids to play with. They remember three girls that they and their younger brother hung out with, but that was about it. So not only were they brothers, they needed each other as best friends too.

They did do some things on their own, especially when they were in the eighth grade and their parents moved to Chadron, Nebraska, a town of 6,000 people that was a little bigger than in Wyoming and six miles from town, so it seemed like moving to New York. Rodd took piano lessons and Todd took guitar. Todd loved football and wrestling and Rodd preferred being a musician. Todd was a little more outgoing, so Rodd always let him break the ice first. Todd always wanted to be a pilot since he was a kid and he would fly with those girls down their dirt airstrip and then over the mountains of Wyoming. Rodd thought it was a nice hobby. Yet the two remained close. In fact, Rodd remembers communicating with his brother many times without using words, from when they were babies. "There's

a lot of non-verbal communication with each other," Rodd said. "You took that for granted. You didn't realize everyone didn't have that. All it took was a nod of the head."

•••••

Their flying career took off when they graduated from high school, although Todd loved it more than Rodd. Rodd got into it to see the world, though he initially wanted to be a musician. Todd simply loved to fly.



"It was that birds-eye view, I guess," Todd said. "You could look down and see everything." When they were sophomores in high school, Chadron State College sent out flyers for its flight school, and that caught Todd's interest. Rodd agreed to tag along. "We were sophomores in a college level class," Rodd said, "and it didn't go well for a while. They were tough courses. But we got it done." Rodd and Todd began working at the airport in Chadron doing odd jobs, and in 1988, they decided to make flying a career by enrolling in an aeronautics school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After staying there two years, they went to Metro State College to try to finish up a four-year degree.

After staying there two years, they went to Metro State College to try to finish up a four-year degree.

The two got some ratings as flight instructors, and then, at age 21, for the first time in their lives, they split up. Rodd stayed in Denver to work for the old Stapleton Airport, and Todd went back home to Nebraska to work as a flight instructor. That's when their flight paths didn't really cross for several years, but that was okay with them. They didn't want to work in the same company anyway, constantly answering questions about who was who, bearing bad jokes about mirrors and things with a stupid grin. So, for a while, when one went one way, the other went the other way. It was tough for a while, but they got to see each other in Nebraska occasionally. When Rodd and Todd first wanted to become pilots, things were tight. There were bunches of flight instructors everywhere, and two major companies, including Pan Am, had just gone under a few years ago. So they did what they could. Rodd worked for a commuter airline, mostly in trips to Nebraska and the Dakotas. Eventually Rodd was offered a job with a small airline and worked in Florida for nine months before the airline went bankrupt. He took another job with a commuter airline before his first job flying a jet, with Midwest Airlines. He enjoyed his job until one day he remembers being in an airport and watching a plane fly into the second tower of the World Trade Center. September 11 had just occurred, and one of his thoughts was that he was going to lose his job just in time for the holidays.

Frontier Twin Pilots

By Dan England

Todd did what he could to get a flying job in the early 90s as well. He worked as a predator controller, shooting coyotes that threatened livestock, until he got laid off from that job and flew as a crop sprayer. He didn't like working with the chemicals, so he flew as an air ambulance pilot, which gave him his first twin-engine experience. "Those early years were kind of bad," Todd said. "You really had to do what you could because it was tight." Things got better in 1998, after he was flying freight for a while and a friend helped him get on with American Eagle airlines. He became a captain in 2000 and moved to Boston, though he didn't like it because it was too far from home. He got his job in 2001 with Frontier, which was closer to home, after a buddy recommended him. At that time, things were really moving along well. It was the exact opposite of when they first started. So he poked his head into Frontier's office, despite September 11, and asked about a job for his brother.

Rodd remembers walking into a room full of Frontier applicants who were on the waiting list for months and thinking the odds were against him. But in March 2002, he got the call from Frontier. "Honestly I think they thought it would be cool if they could have twin brothers," Rodd said and laughed. "I think that's what got me the job more than anything, was the novelty of it." Where went one, the other eventually followed, once again. They may not have wanted to work in the same place, and sure, it gets old, just like they thought. "People will tell me they remember me from a trip," Todd said, "and I'll have to tell them, 'No, you probably flew with my brother.'" Two years after Todd essentially got Rodd the job, Rodd was thinking how cool it would be to get to fly with his brother. Todd was just upgraded to captain and Rodd was a first officer, so it was possible. One day, Todd was on call, and Rodd's pilot started feeling sick. Todd got the call, and sure enough, it was with Rodd. Todd joined Rodd in Denver on a relatively clear day but it was really busy that afternoon in Los Angeles, the international hour when all the overseas flights come in. "We heard all these strange voices, and suddenly we heard the supervisor telling us we needed to come around again because it was getting too tight to land," Rodd said. It was an unusual procedure. Maybe a pilot does it once a year. You have to bring the gear up, circle around and try to land again. At that point it's easy to overshoot the strip and it gets chaotic close to the ground. "We did it, though," Rodd said. "We made all the right calls. It seemed like there were a lot of things going on that you would have to communicate with others that we didn't have to say. It was just like the old days. We could communicate without words." They like working together after all. Even though, these days, the 39-year-old brothers lead different lives, Rodd in Denver and single, Todd married in Chadron, Nebraska with a stepson, 12-year-old Michael Kruse and his wife, Michelle, they remain close. "Even today, I can call up and talk about something about work," Todd said, "and he understands right away."

In June 2006, Todd found out just how important it was to have someone to talk to. He was diagnosed with colon cancer. Doctors got it in the early stages. These days he's still at home recovering from a hernia related to the colon surgery to remove the cancer. He didn't have to go through chemotherapy or radiation, but it was still a scary time. "He was very supportive," Todd said of Rodd. "I could tell he was pretty worried, but I called him right away after my surgery. Every one of my checkups I call him right away." Things are okay now. They're fine, in fact. When one needed help, the other was there, just like it's been their whole lives.

Cont'd on Pg. 30



Rodd & Todd Rickenbach at Denver International Airport. Photo by Barry Staver.

Twin Pilots - Cont'd from Pg. 29

Twin Tidbits



Rodd & Todd Rickenbach. Photo by Barry Staver.

ON WHETHER IT WAS SOMETIMES A DISADVANTAGE TO BE A TWIN:

"I don't think so. There was one thing that set us apart as a person. It's one of the cool things you have that others don't have." — Rodd

"Well, yeah, and a lot of that was driving to school together. I can remember being 16 and not being very happy having to share a car with him." — Todd

ON THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD TO SPLIT UP AT AGE 21:

"It was tough at first, but I could still call him up. The hard thing was when we finally separated; I didn't have the icebreaking, people skills that he did. I let him take care of that. It was something I had to learn." — Rodd

"It was weird the first few days, but he was making it home quite a bit, it was definitely an adjustment." — Todd

ON ALWAYS HAVING SOMEONE ELSE AROUND:

"I liked it because you always had someone to play with. I see it with my single child now. He relies on his friends, and when they're all busy, it bums him out. We never had that issue." — Todd

ON WHY TWINS TEND TO BE SIMILAR AND DO THE SAME ACTIVITIES:

"My take on it is you're the same age and you know all the same people. You have the same experiences at the same time. So it's pretty inevitable that certain things are similar. The fact isn't just that it's you're twins, it's that you're the same age." — Rodd

Freelance writer Dan England has worked as a reporter, columnist and editor at the Greeley Tribune in Greeley, Colorado since 1999. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1994 and worked at the Salina Journal before moving to the Tribune. He is married to Kate and has a toddler, Jayden, and identical twin baby girls, Allie and Andie. He is an avid mountain climber who works part-time as a guide and has climbed all 54 of Colorado's 14ers. He also enjoys running, music, movies, reading, blogging and playing poker, although he rarely has time for any of that.



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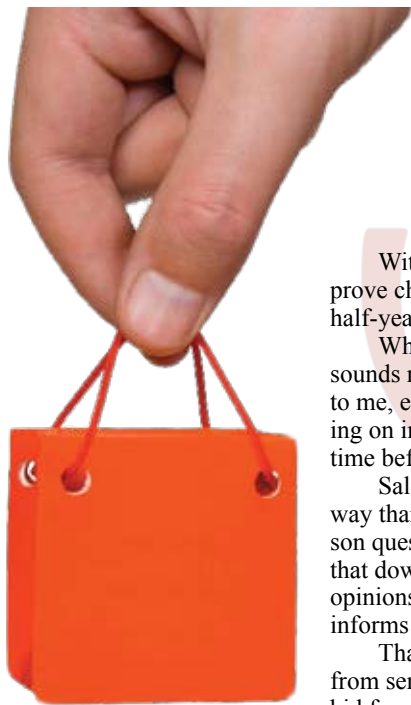


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Shopping with Daddy: A Mall Outing with Twins

By Jef Coburn



With my wife's birthday approaching, I'm in search of the perfect purse. This in itself would prove challenging enough for me, but since she's working today, I've brought our three-and-a-half-year-old son and daughter along to "help" find Mommy's present.

When we reach the mall, I strap on the backpack that I call my field kit (because "field kit" sounds manlier than "diaper bag"). I unbuckle the kids and say, "Safety chain." They sing it back to me, each taking one of my hands. It's a happy moment, but even now, a stopwatch is switching on in my brain. I know I have to stay focused, find the purse, and get out. I have just so much time before the 'big meltdown.'

Salespeople are very attentive. They've learned it's easier to help me and send me on my way than to clean up the devastation my spawn may leave in their wake. I try to ask the salesperson questions, but only about half of what I say is directed at her: "How much is this one? Put that down! Do you have it in brown? Hands to yourself!" I ask a few nearby shoppers for their opinions and finally settle on a black leather quilted number because, as a well dressed woman informs me, quilted is in. Mission accomplished.

That tired feeling that comes from shopping at the mall is not just from the walking. It's from sensory overload. Everywhere we turn, the music is blaring and the lights are glaring in a bid for our attention. All that stimulation can initially lift the spirits (making us, no doubt, more prone to buy something) but after a while, the euphoria gives way to mental fatigue. As my children become progressively cranky and impatient, I remind myself that shopping at the mall is a lot to ask of anyone, especially children.

Mere physical stamina is not the issue, as the kids will later demonstrate at the play area. After being around lots of children and finally having my own, I've figured out where they get all that energy: They drain it out of the grown-ups around them! I don't know how, exactly, but I know that the peppier they get, the more exhausted I feel. No doubt somebody's working up a study on this for some medical journal (probably in England—the Brits love to study the quirky stuff).

The problem starts when my daughter utters those inevitable words: "I've gotta go potty." I weigh my options. The only place I know there's a family restroom is near the mall play area. Experience has already taught me that the play area is the last stop on this thrill ride. When I extract them from that little fenced-in oasis of fun, it had better be because they've played long enough to fall asleep on the way home. I decide instead to make our way to the food court. It's about time for lunch anyway, and surely there will be a family restroom near the food court.

No such luck. In all fairness, I should say that this particular mall tries harder than most to accommodate our lavatory needs. Nearly all their men's rooms have changing tables (how common would that have been just a few years ago?), and some even have a separate changing room between the "outside" and the actual restroom (although the sign on the door doesn't always mention it). None of this, of course, helps me right now.

It's an awkward situation. Nobody cares if you wheel a baby stroller into the men's room, but how old can my daughter be before it's creepy to bring her in? Fresh out of options, I peek in the door. Drat, guys at the urinal. It takes about a minute or so for them to come out, at which point I glance both ways like a shoplifter and rush my kids into the bathroom.

The handicapped stall is taken, so we cram ourselves into a three-foot-wide booth and lock the door. I'm afraid somebody will be angry if he sees my daughter, but I don't want her to feel like she's doing anything wrong. I hear another man come into the bathroom. I lift her onto the toilet just in time. "I know somebody who's getting a potty treat," I say with a smile, careful not to say her name. Another man enters.

They're hungry. I'm hungry. I hear no flushing, but the sink comes on again and again. Come on, buddy, how long can it take to wash your hands?" I look at the hood on my son's coat and get an idea. "We're gonna play dress-up," I whisper to them. I take her pink, flowery coat off and stuff it in my field kit. I take my son's coat off, whispering, "May I borrow this?" He nods. I put it on my daughter, gather her long hair up in the back, and put the hood up. They both smile. After a quick precautionary peek out of the stall, I sling my kit over one shoulder and whisk them out past the obsessive-compulsive guy at the sink.

I seat the children at a table right next to the food counter. The lady behind the counter is very patient as I try to decide what to order. As I look back over my shoulder for the fifth time, she says in an understanding voice, "They're all right. I've got my eye on them for you."

We eat. We play. I drive. They sleep.

The next day, my wife drives to the mall and exchanges the purse for one she actually likes. ♥



Jef, his wife (sans her new purse) and their boy/girl twins.

Our Family's Journey With Sensory Processing Disorder

By Cynthia Thorp

EMMA'S STORY

Looking at her big blue eyes, you can't help but smile. Emma is a happy and spirited child, albeit small for her age. But we had hoped for a gentler entry into her world. Emma and her twin brother, Cameron, were born on August 31, 2003 by emergency C-Section. Both weighed just three pounds each. Fortunately, despite the shock of the experience, we were told our twins were "big" compared to other preemies that entered the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Cameron and Emma were released on October 4, 2003, both barely bigger than my husband's hand.

As a family, we were being led down a path, one which none of us had volunteered. But surely, it seemed, if any family was capable of meeting the needs of our children it was us. Glenn is a physician in our community, and I was pursuing my graduate degree in clinical psychology. Both of us were not naïve to raising children, either. As older parents (I was 41, Glenn was 50), we had plenty of experience. Together we had already raised four children, now in their 20s.

Emma started preschool at 14 months, but she was easily frustrated with simple tasks. I consulted her pediatrician about my concerns, but he stressed not to worry, she was healthy and gaining weight. Cameron also seemed to have sensitivities, but less intense. I began to notice certain sensations like clothing seams, socks, shoes, or sand seemed to trigger extreme outbursts. Outings often became a waiting game for the next tantrum. A child psychologist suggested stricter discipline. But I always sensed that these things were beyond Emma's control. By 16 months, I would get daily phone calls from the preschool to pick her up.

One day I met up with Glenn at the preschool. As I walked in, Glenn came out with Emma held under one arm wrapped tightly in a blanket. She looked like a hotdog in a bun, her smiling face poked out the end. While she found this hilarious, the encounter led to an emotional and painful awakening: We needed help. I discovered the book, *The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder*, by Carol Stock Kranowitz. Emma's problem finally had a name: **Sensory Processing Disorder**.

Early intervention is critical in the treatment of SPD, so that a child can learn to successfully cope. Because prematurity is often associated with multiple births, preemies are at a higher risk for neurological disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or SPD. SPD may also commonly appear with other disorders such as autism, ADHD, fragile X, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. Therefore, your child's diagnosis may not only appear hazy to you, but the professional who provides treatment.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

I've found that developing the health of my child is similar to keeping our front lawn healthy. Like weeds, SPD is something of an opportunist; it never goes away. Therefore, like weed-pulling, treatment should not be the primary focus in the sensory health of our children. So, how can parents build a healthy sensory environment? Lots of love, good nutrition, exercise, and providing a sensory-rich environment are critical. Also, focusing on practical ways to support your child with SPD should be in the context of the family. It is important for mothers, fathers, and siblings to develop the strategies and skills necessary to cope (emotionally, physically, and financially) that a child with SPD will present. The health of your family and your child's outcome are linked: If your family is healthy, your child will have a better chance to be healthy. Jeanne Sangirardi Ganz, OTR/L, BCP, a pediatric Occupational Therapist and author of *Including SI for Parents: Sensory Integration Strategies at Home and School* suggests a threefold process for parents in supporting a child and family with SPD. She suggests that parents should first educate themselves about sensory processing. Read books, attend conferences, and check-out internet resources. Secondly, it's important to communicate with professionals and support groups for parents of children with SPD. Finally, participate in activities that provide sensory "nutrition" for your child and ways for the family to interact effectively.

WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER (SPD)?

Sensory integration (SI) refers to the way our brains process our senses of the world. Some people have very well integrated neurological systems (an athlete, for example), some have poorly integrated ones (those with Sensory Processing Disorder). Most of us fall somewhere in between. Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) has many names. SPD has also been called Sensory Integration Disorder (SID) or Dysfunction in Sensory Integration (DSI), which leads to a lot of confusion in its recognition and treatment. To make matters worse, SPD is still not included in standard references for which physicians or insurance companies refer for diagnoses.

It's currently estimated between 12 and 17 percent of all children have some degree of sensory processing difficulties. Like Emma, some may be highly sensitive or react immediately to sensory stimulation. This is hypersensitivity or sensory defensiveness. Others may be under-responsive or hypo-sensitive. These individuals are unable to detect soft touch sensations.

Children who are under-responsive often bite or hit themselves (or others). Finally, there are those children who can't discriminate any sensory aspect of objects appropriately. For example, this child may not be able to tell the difference between a baseball and a tennis ball.



THREE REASONS TO SEEK HELP

- Does your child struggle with simple things like crawling, running, jumping, talking, listening, hugging, and playing with other children?
- Does the child's behavior dramatically differ from other children?
- Do others suggest you seek help (teachers, pediatrician, or friends)?

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Occupational therapy helps children to take part in the normal activities of childhood, such as playing with friends, enjoying school, eating, dressing, and sleeping. An OT develops techniques to help increase regulation of sensation and methods to deal with tantrums and/or sleep disturbance.

CHALLENGED RESOURCES

Parenting a child with SPD, or any special needs child, can be very expensive. Even if you have good insurance, a parent can be faced with many co-pays for appointments, assessments and therapy. However, meaningful supports to therapy can also come from participation in simple, homemade activities and supports. The list below provides some inexpensive ways to support your child with SPD outside of traditional OT:

- 1) Have your child participate in sports. Swimming, gymnastics, or karate provides a multi-sensory experience.
- 2) Swings or hammocks can engage a variety of senses.
- 3) Hand toys such as Koosh Balls or other squeezable toys; you can find these in all different sizes and shapes at a dollar store.
- 4) Sandbox play. Hide small toys in a container of sand (or dried beans, rice, or pasta) so the child can "discover" them.
- 5) Exercise or therapy balls help a child develop strength, balance, and coordination. They engage the vestibular and tactile senses.
- 6) An aquarium with fish can be calming sensory experience for everyone.
- 7) Play-Doh engages tactile and proprioceptive senses. Or make your own using 1 cup flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water. Knead in a little food coloring or add a scent (if tolerated).
- 8) People Hotdog: Have your child lay on an exercise mat with feet and head outside the "bun." Use a soft brush to imitate "ketchup" or "mustard." Slowly roll up the mat, making sure to press gently so the child feels the deep pressure. This is Emma's favorite!
- 9) Finger-paints are an inexpensive way to engage visual and tactile senses.
- 10) Purchase a Sensory Tunnel or body sock. These tools are great for calming and strengthening.

REACH OUT

Parents of children with SPD often feel alone, alienated, and ineffective as parents. Friends and bystanders may not understand your child's challenges. You may learn this by their questioning looks, or just a gut-sense they're not comfortable. Participating in parent groups, online support groups, and conferences, provides a feeling of empowerment that other parents are coping with similar challenges.

WEBSITES, MAGAZINES & BOOKS

- www.SPDDNetwork.org** - Formerly the KID Foundation. SPD Network focuses on research, education, and advocacy related to Sensory Processing Disorder.
- www.prematurity.org** - A website for parents of premature infants, toddlers, and children.
- www.out-of-sync-child.com** - An extensive resource web site on SPD for the book of the same name by Carol Stock Kranowitz.
- S. I. Focus* - A magazine dedicated to promoting awareness of SPD. (www.sifocus.com)
- Parenting a Child with Sensory Processing Disorder: A Family Guide to Understanding & Supporting Your Sensory-Sensitive Child* by Christopher R. Auer, M.A., and Susan L. Blumberg, Ph.D. (2006).
- The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder* by Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A. (2005). ♡



Cynthia Thorp is a graduate student of Alliant International University, California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) pursuing a degree in Clinical Psychology. She is the proud mother of 4-year-old twins, Cameron and Emma.

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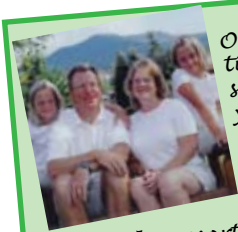
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Where does your family like to go on vacation?



Our family's favorite destination is Smuggler's Notch Resort in Vermont. We visit every year in August, and we've also visited in the winter for skiing. Smuggler's Notch has so much to offer families. Aside from the spectacular mountain setting, the resort offers activities for kids of all ages. Kids have the option of attending daily camp programs, or exploring the resort's facilities and activities with their parents. Our twin daughters are very social creatures; they're lucky to have each other as buddies, but they also like to make friends with other kids, and the camps offer the perfect opportunity. The camps also allow them to explore their own individual interests; the programs include options for performing arts, nature and hiking, crafts, or sports and games. While the kids are enjoying camp, my husband and I delight in the opportunity to hike, explore the town of Stowe, or just spend a leisurely afternoon at one of the pools around the resort. Sometimes we can even manage to convince the girls to attend skip camp and accompany us on day trips to Run Runners Reserve, the big city of Montreal, the Ben & Jerry ice cream factory or shopping in Burlington. The accommodations at Smuggler's Notch are perfect for families, with fully outfitted kitchens and comfortable furnishings. Many units have upscale amenities like Jacuzzi tubs and balconies. Our family is able to spread out and make ourselves at home. We really love visiting "Smuggs" and it's been our family's favorite vacation destination since 2003, and we look forward to many more years of fun getaways.
~ Fierro Family, Virginia Beach, VA



Destin, Florida is our favorite vacation destination. We have three children. Luke is age 5 and Jacob and Emily are almost three. We have traveled to Destin yearly for the past nine years. We love Destin because the beaches are gorgeous and there is a lot to see and do. We like to spend our days at the pool or the beach, and in the evenings shop, eat out or in. ~Julie Vick, Indiana



Editor's note: The Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida area is our family's favorite vacation spot, too! The clean, sugar white beaches and 85+ degrees ocean temperature makes swimming in the ocean so much fun. This area is located in Florida's panhandle and is situated on the Gulf of Mexico. There is a ton for families to do, too!

Grandma's house is our family's favorite vacation spot. The girls don't get to see their maternal grandmother all that often because she lives about 10 hours away from us. We make the long drive once a year for a much-needed vacation. It's great because the girls have their own room with tons of toys, there's also a pool and of course a free babysitter (thanks Grandma!). And Grandma's house is only an hour away from Indianapolis, which has a great children's museum and zoo. We never want to leave but, always feel very well rested when we return home. The attached picture was taken at Grandma's house in July 2007. The girls were 16 months old; Taylor (left) and Lauren.



~ The Price Family, Winchester, VA

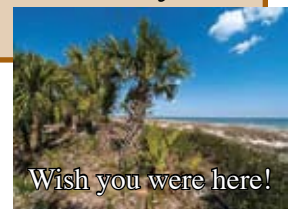
In April of 2006, my husband and I set out on a travel adventure that created memories to last a lifetime! We took our 11-month-old twin girls and our 4-year-old son to Italy. My younger brother was getting married and I couldn't imagine missing the event. My husband and I had been to Italy once before, the year before our son was born. Then, we were married with no kids, and had lots of freedom to have late night dinners, drink wine, and enjoy art and architecture. Our trip in 2006 was quite another experience. We spent many weeks planning the flights, packing the necessities, figuring out how to carry everything, mapping out the logistics of our travels, and saying quite a few prayers. We flew to Rome, rented a car, and spent the first eight days, just the five of us taking in the hill towns of Tuscany. We stayed at a vineyard that was our home base. Each day we set out on a new path and explored the countryside, ate authentic Tuscan food, and explored castles and churches. The next six days, we spent with my family on the Amalfi Coast in Ravello for a spectacular wedding by the sea. This part of the trip meant extra hands and help from family members and friends. Italians do not have large families. The sight of us entering a café or strolling down the cobblestones with our double stroller and 4-year-old son in tow was quite a sight for the Italians. Exploring Italy with children was fascinating because it required us to take things at a much slower pace and really experience the culture and everyday life in Italy. All in all, the trip was a huge success. Taking twins out and about means taking a leap of faith. It requires planning of course; but most of all it requires patience, a sense of humor, common sense, and a good digital camera to capture the memories of our three little international travelers. The picture attached is of us in Ravello on the Amalfi Coast, April 2006. Included in the photo are my husband Erik, myself, (Trish), our son Will, and our daughters, Mary Katherine and Elizabeth. ~Trish Rolstad, Davenport, Iowa



Our favorite family travel destination is to Disney World. We take our twin girls there each year for their birthday. Why? Because we love all of the entertainment and it really brings some of their favorite TV shows to life. There is so much to do for active time and down time and with little or no cost if you stay on the property. Really, the main reason we love to go there is this that we have a son who recently turned age 26 on his last birthday. I tried for many years to conceive again but was unable. Our son loved Disney so we went often. Even though we had great times, I know my son would have loved a younger sibling to do things with on vacation that we didn't particularly enjoy doing with him. So taking the girls (our son usually goes along as well) and seeing Disney again through their eyes is not only fun for the present but reminiscent of the past. My son loves remembering things he did as a little boy and the girls (Jessica and Olivia) love it as much as he always did. ~Teresa Longstreet, Thomasville, Georgia



We thoroughly enjoy Hilton Head Island, SC. We rent a house there in the Sea Pines Plantation section. Our four-year-old twins, Graham and Grayson, love riding in the bike carrier and being "bused" all over the island by their daddy who rides the bicycle. Hilton Head has miles and miles of bicycle trails and we really enjoy cycling and playing at the beach. ~ Jodi S. Jarrell, Huntington, West Virginia



Wish you were here!

I am a Mom of Twins

By Tammy Smith, Chief Operating Officer & National Event Co-Director for the Fetal Hope Foundation



Photo by: Neela Sanchez of N-Focus photography

I am the mother of twins. I am not sure I can ever imagine joining a twins club though, because it would just be so very painful. Please allow me to share my story with all of you. My husband and I had tried to get pregnant for four long years. We went through so many procedures and tests. You cannot imagine the devastation when I found out it was very unlikely I would ever get pregnant on my own. I had developed endometriosis which creates toxins not conducive to getting pregnant; I can't even believe I kept it together so long in that doctor's office. It wasn't until I had gotten into my car that I let the flood of emotion wash over me and my tears began to flow.

After much debate my husband and I made the decision to dive into the In-vitro fertilization process. We heard some family members tell us that we were crazy because we might have eight kids. But kids are what we wanted so desperately, so we sold our house so we could use all the collateral we had in it, closed our retirement accounts and began the long process of shots, blood draws and daily appointments.

Only a woman who has been told she has two tiny heartbeats can imagine the bliss of being pregnant with twins. We had two tiny heart-beating peanuts in one tiny sac. We were having identical twins and we were on top of the world. At 16-weeks gestation I went in for my third ultrasound to learn the sex of our twins. We were having boys. I loved watching them move around and my friend that was with me was also in awe. That's why we never realized they were concerned and taking extra long until the doctor came in. I was told that I had TTTS or Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome. As they explained what this was, I felt like I had an enormous slab of concrete sitting on my chest. Once again I maintained my composure in the office but I'm not sure how. I felt anything but calm. My miracle pregnancy was in jeopardy and our long battle began. Every appointment we received more devastating news. We had to make the most difficult choices of our lives. As my twin boys struggled, so did we but I continued to be strong and positive despite everything that was happening beyond my control. As their tiny hearts began to give out we were immediately sent to a fertility center to save our babies, only our doctors could not save both lives and we lost our sweet donor. It was the worst day of my life. Yet, I was still pregnant and the very next day they were seeing improvement in our recipient's heart. I had to stay calm and focused and most importantly positive. Our battle had just begun as I had an ever shortening cervix, constant contractions, and a long tour of bed-rest in the hospital. The day had come to deliver these sweet babies. We had somehow by the power of prayer made it to 36 weeks gestation. Not even my doctors could believe it.

You cannot imagine the power of this bitter sweet moment. The bliss of delivering a baby that has struggled so hard and to hold him even for a moment in your arms and know he is safe, yet his journey not over. Coupled with the sheer devastation of delivering a baby so tiny and so still and holding him in the palm of your hand wishing things were different. The pain is unbearable. They say that time heals all wounds, however as a wound heals and begins to close it is often jagged, rough, red and ugly. It is often raised and occasionally even sore. Over time it softens and fades but it never disappears. It is always there to remind us of our battles and our losses.

I was often shocked when people with the best of intentions would say, "Well at least you still have one baby." As if this was some sort of consolation for my troubles. You would never say to someone who has lost a leg, "Well at least you still have the other leg." Yet, I have now met families who went home after their long toils with pregnancy, empty-handed and with not even one of their babies. So because of this, I am blessed that at least I do still have one single twin survivor. My son is now almost three and I love him with all my heart. But, I don't get to know what it is like to hear him giggle with his twin brother or wonder what trouble they are conjuring up together, and I won't get to watch them both blow out their birthday candles or experience that bond only twins know.

I am the mother of a single twin survivor. I honor and celebrate my twins every single day by working with the Fetal Hope Foundation. I help spread awareness. I provide support and resources to those families who have lost one or both of their babies or to those going through a pregnancy with TTTS. I help organize events to raise money that helps other families save one or hopefully both of their babies. Most of all, I help provide hope to so many that are given none! Help support the Fetal Hope Foundation and the TTTS Race for Hope National Charity Events all across the US. Why? Because I am the mother of twins! **Learn more at www.fetalhope.org.** ♥

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**FETAL HOPE
FOUNDATION**

Umbrian Dreams:

By Jesse Wasser-Nash

TRAVELING ABROAD WITH OUR INFANT TWINS

As a travel writer for the last 20 years, I've visited some of the most luxurious and exotic destinations on earth. And Italy has become one of my favorites. Each time I return I develop a deeper appreciation for the country and its people. Some years back, while still a single man, I swore that if I ever married and had children, I would take my family on assignment with me, so they could experience the joys of this enchanting land. We'd visit the Italian countryside and delight together in its vast cultural wonders. So when my wife announced in early March 2006, that she was pregnant with identical twin girls, I was ecstatic! Finally, I would have the chance to turn my dream into reality. Evangeline and Annabelle were born on October 16th, two healthy, beautiful babies (who bear a fortuitous resemblance to my wife—yes, there IS a God!) And just a month after we brought them home from the hospital, we were already planning our first trip abroad with them-- to Italy, of course! By 8 months of age in June of the following year, they made their auspicious debut as world travelers to a destination that has proven itself worthy of such special guests.

Orvietanos and Their Love of Children

Just weeks after my wife became pregnant, the Italian Tourism Board extended an invitation to me. I would have the extraordinary privilege of travelling to the region of Umbria, in particular, to the quaint village of Orvieto. Aside from their general warmth, friendliness and sincerity, Umbrians really love babies! It was a quality I had observed over the years. Their love of the littlest among them had always delighted me. Of course, people all over the world take great pleasure in children, especially twins, but there was even a more special appreciation in Orvieto that had always lifted my spirit. It was that effusion of positive energy that fueled my desire to take my wife and children there. This would not be just a family vacation. This would be a pilgrimage. It would begin in Orvieto, and end with the fulfillment of a dream.



Orvieto is a family-friendly place. When you meet a restaurateur, winemaker, hotelier... you meet their whole family. "The mama" really does work in the restaurant's kitchen, and she's happy to make your acquaintance, and to admire your children and in our case our twin babies. It's always been that way.

On my first visit, I met David Tordi and Alessandro Basili, who run a villa booking agency called Teseotur, and Claudio & Leonardo Martinelli, in Orvieto's top-rated restaurant, Maurizio's. Claudio & Leonardo's family runs the "ristorante", and also make some of the best Sagrantino di Montefalco wine in the region, which is called Martinelli, after his family name. David and Alessandro have access to some of the most beautiful villas and farmhouses in Italy, in particular, in the Umbria region of Orvieto. They are also experts in choosing Child Safe properties and Claudio & Leonardo have THE restaurant in Orvieto where everyone — celebrities, politicians and locals — come to eat, drink and socialize. They will welcome you with open arms just like they did when pop princess, Madonna, who briefly visited Orvieto a few years ago, stopped by!

La Chiusetta, Umbrian Paradise in the Mountainside

As busy parents of multiples, these folks truly understand families need to relax and recover from jetlag during the first few days of their stay. So it was perfect that, for our family dream vacation, they chose an ancient farm property called, La Chiusetta, high in the hills of Orvieto. Thirteen hectares of lush land, three buildings: a stone farmhouse, where my family stayed; the main building where the owner, Paolo Salvatori, lives, and which houses the property's staff, office and kitchen; and a third building for those with limited budgets who are just passing through for a few days. With so much land, this was the perfect property for our twins. Kids can roam freely, although it is recommended an adult be present to keep an eye on them. On a clear day, you can even see Tuscany off in the distance! Orvieto is in the center of everything. It's only an hour-and-fifteen minutes from Florence, one-hour from Rome and just 45-minutes from Chianti.

Peace of Mind in an Emergency

Friends are there for you in good times and bad, and David and Alessandro, who had provided good times, helped us through one of most frightening experiences of my life. One of our daughters had a deposit of mucus in her lungs that made breathing difficult. I didn't know whom to call or where to take her but my hosts did, by thinking and acting quickly and professionally. When minutes counted, we could count on our Teseotur friends. In short order, paramedics were on the scene, and speeding our child to the finest children's



hospital in the region. This veteran traveler learned there was a lot he didn't know. Emergency phone numbers (118), for example, along with the location of the nearest hospital and the policy regarding payments for hospital emergency room visits (there was no charge for the first

visit; and the second would have been about as much as filling your car's gas tank.) After such an experience, it should come as no surprise that I am already planning my family's return. Traveling to Umbria is like visiting an old friend, who treats you like a very special relative, and the rest of my family now shares my Umbrian Dream. To contact Teseotur for prices and to view villa properties, please go to www.teseotur.com or send them an email at customer@teseotur.com, or call David or Alessandro directly at +39-0763-393804 or +39-0763-305572. ♥



Photos by Irina Wasser & Jesse Wasser-Nash



Twinfant Travel Tips

By Irina Wasser & Jesse Wasser-Nash Proud Parents of Evangenline & Annabelle

This was our first major trip abroad with our 8-month-old twins and there was a lot of advanced planning necessary. We started packing four days in advance to ensure that nothing would be forgotten and to reduce our stress. My wife made a checklist, along with our pediatrician, of everything we would need to pack and bring with us, including such items as medicated diaper cream, pedialyte water, cold medicine, oral-j teethingers, thermometer, and this was just for starters. As far as our babies' formula, we calculated how much of it we would need for the trip and added additional 3-5 days worth just in case we somehow needed more and had most of it shipped in advance. It is also highly recommended that, whatever medications your baby might be on or products your baby regularly uses at home, that you bring them with you. You really don't want to have to try and buy these items in a foreign country.

As for food, we always give them fresh foods at home so we decided we'd do the same while we were abroad. We gave them fresh fruits and baked/steamed vegetables which were pureed by

Cont'd on Pg. 50

Are They All Twins?

My interview with Kate Gosselin from the popular reality TV Show on TLC *Jon & Kate Plus 8!*

By **Christa D. Reed**

Are they all twins? Are there two sets of triplets? As parents of multiples, we've all been asked some pretty silly and strange questions when we are out in public, especially when they are young. But when you have a set of twins and a set of sextuplets, you get funny stares, crazy looks and those questions from perfect strangers seem to be an everyday occurrence. It seems as though the bigger the group you have in your family walking down the street, the more your children seem to get lumped into a 'set'. After talking with this dynamo, Kate Gosselin, I got the feeling that being a mom of multiple-multiples was all part of a perfect plan for her and her husband Jon. Having a reality TV show and a crew of people (who are now like family to them) and always there to capture every single moment of their busy and hectic lives, was only the beginning. This family knows how to live life to the fullest and we love how they allow us to peek inside a tiny window into their lives. Read my in-depth interview with this super mom, Kate Gosselin, and how she and her husband Jon keep up with the demands of raising two sets of multiples.

TWINS — How did you manage the feedings when they were infants?

Kate: I lived my first year feeling guilty that I couldn't be there for all these babies at all the times they needed me. I just needed to learn to accept the help when it was there but instead I tried to do it all myself. That was one of the most difficult things for me. When you're feeling overwhelmed you can't refuse help when offered and then become an exhausted heap because who does that serve? Nobody. You just need to figure out what works best for you and in our case, we had friends, neighbors and perfect strangers volunteer to hold a baby and help with the feedings. I just knew that was the only way I could keep them all fed and happy. I can even remember many times having those moments when all I felt like doing was running over to everyone and snatching up my babies from everyone there helping and say 'that's mine, thank you'; 'that's mine, thank you' as I went down the row scooping up each baby and holding them all in my arms. Those thoughts were fleeting and more due to mere exhaustion and the feeling like I was no longer in control of the situation.

TWINS — One of the most popular questions that mothers of young multiples ask us is... How do you keep your multiples on the same sleeping schedule for naps and at bedtime?

Kate: There is no option. It's just a must. Our twins were our first kids and I knew life would be very difficult. When my twins were very young I started putting them in their cribs to sleep. Put them in, let them cry and eventually they fall asleep. Maddie was crying and crying. I can remember that by the end of that hour, I was even sobbing. I kept telling myself, this is just a test, this is just a test. They have to do it. It was because of the way we handled our twins that gave us the strength to keep trying because it was a necessity to have them go down for naps on a regular schedule. They were in their cribs until they were over age three. I will say to all parents of multiples out there to hold off on getting rid of cribs as long as possible. For us, once they were in a bed, there were certain ones that were done taking naps and others that would continue sleeping. Luckily, we have enough space in our home that when some want to sleep and others don't we can split them up and everyone seems happier. We did end up putting our three boys together and our three girls together. Hannah and Leah rarely take a nap. Alexis will only nap by herself in the basement. We were very determined to make this work but after months of frustration and a household of miserable children (and parents), we finally determined (by trial & error) that if anyone was going to nap, we were going to have to be flexible and accept that this is just going to happen. Some still need naps; some don't and we are going with that for now.

TWINS — Did you have to change the way you discipline your kids when you have six young toddlers?

Kate: Yes. That is the most difficult thing we deal with in our house. I could talk for two hours about this. We deal with the obvious problems of everyone tattle telling on the others. Who broke this? Everyone blames the other. For awhile I would just yell at all of them. As they got older, I would start to learn who I can trust more and who was telling the truth. We always talk about the importance of being hon-

THE GOSSELIN TEN
Jonathan & Kate and the
children: Cara & Madelyn
(twins, age 7) Alexis,
Hannah, Aaden, Collin, Leah
& Joel (sextuplets, age 4)



est and we are always telling them, Always tell the ... Truth! For now, I will ask a majority who did what and find out which ones got into the trouble or weren't following our rules.

TWINS — I know with having four boys myself (including twins) we always feel like a referee, do you feel that way, too?

Kate: Some days it feels like discipline is all we do... They always want me to solve their problems for them and figure out how to handle their disagreements but they need to deal with it.

TWINS — You have 5 girls and 3 boys... can you tell the difference between the two sexes and do they tend to react differently to things?

Kate: The boys are definitely different than the girls. They are amazing! They always want to take things apart and they are always breaking things to see how they work. It's a different energy with them then with the girls. The girls tend to be more involved in the 'care-taking' and helping out around the house. It's really fun to see how they interact and to see those differences within the sextuplet set.

TWINS — Life with one set of multiples can be challenging, what were your thoughts when you found out you were having a set of six, too?



Kate: When we had the twins, we didn't miss a beat and it was somewhat easy for us. Jon would take one, I would take the other and we seemed to have a great handle on life with our girls. When we first found out we were going to be having sextuplets, we thought we knew what life would be like since we were 'seasoned' veterans at that point and thought it really wouldn't be that much different than raising twins. We soon discovered how wrong we were. Having six babies at once is an entirely different ballgame and it took us close to 14 months before we even left the house and ventured out into the world. I think we also realized that we couldn't do this on our own and needed help.

TWINS — I'm sure you get a great deal of attention whenever you leave the house with your entire family... I love the fact that you and Jon are not afraid to leave the house with your kids. Do you have any tips for families on ways to get out of the house when you need to arrive on time?

Kate: Dad has to help because when you have this many, not helping is no option. One thing that really helps us to stay on track is that I do the same thing each time we leave. I always have a certain bag with tons of snacks and juice, the car is packed with emergency clothing, extra undies, snacks, animal crackers and either an extra bottle or juice cup. I pack the same thing every time and we always have plenty of food and plenty of snacks on hand when we go out. At this point, doing it this way is so second nature to me. I can remember that we used to be late to church all the time because it was 45 minutes away. So, after a couple of weeks of being late, Jon had a great idea. What if we ate breakfast in the car on the way to church? We packed dry cereal and other snacks and then our breakfast became eating in the car. We have never been late to church since. It's really about taking short cuts. You have to do it. Always plan ahead. Back up your time frame in case things don't go the way you originally planned.

TWINS — Have you noticed that your twins have a special bond with each other? Do the sextuplets also have that strong 'multiples' bond? In what ways do you see that? What ways does it differ from the twins?

Kate: It's so much the same and so much different. When the twins have their differences they work it out between them. I don't see that same communication as strong with the sextuplets. I will say that they do know they are a set because they talk in 'we's' and always notice when someone is gone. They do realize they have a tight bond and they hug and kiss each other and really miss the one that has been gone, they really notice when someone in the set is missing. Lexy, Hannah and Leah are very close and the boys tend to stick together, too.

TWINS — When shopping for the holidays or birthdays; how do you determine what to buy for your twins and for the sextuplets? Do you buy the same toy for each one?

Kate: For Kara & Maddie, we usually do not buy them the same toy and usually ask other people to buy separate toys. Please, everyone, do not buy the same toy for your twins because the chances of them wanting to play with the same exact thing at the same time is rare. I can remember one Christmas when the sextuplets were two, I had this great idea to have each one get to open up four presents under the tree so I bought 24 gifts. They were so overwhelmed by the entire thing,

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that Kara and Maddie ended up opening the remaining stuff for them. Now, I get concerned about space and how much room it will take up in our house. How big is it, where would it go? This year, they had different interests and I really thought long and hard about what to give each of them. I did buy some general things they would all enjoy but then I also bought each child one special and interesting gift that they each would have just for them. One thing I have realized, in our house they have very little of their own personal things. So that is why I wanted to do something special for each one and I really think I am going to keep this tradition going.

TWINS — With our twins, we always made a point to get them each a small cake of their own AND we always sang the *Happy Birthday* song two times. What does your family do, six songs and six cakes?

Kate: Yes, for the twins, we have always sung the song two times and for the sextuplets, yes, we do sing the song six times! They get so excited when they get to hear their only their name being sung. Think about it, you never had to share your birthday song with anyone, did you? That's why we have no problem singing the song six times.

TWINS — How do you find time for your relationship and marriage when you are managing two sets of multiples? Do you have any suggestions on ways couples with multiples can find time for each other, too? What are some of the things you do together to find that balance?

Kate: First of all, I would say whether this is your only set or if you have multiple-multiples hang on in that first tough year. Let's face it, there is a lot of anger and frustration because of the lack of sleep and added work load but it doesn't mean you don't love each other anymore. You're tired and have so much more work than you ever had before, so just realize this and stay bonded however you can. At six months you realize that there is a world going on out there outside of your home and at one year, you can start thinking about possibly going out together for some one-on-one time. One way Jon & I stay connected is when all the children are in bed at night. This is our time we have set aside just for us. We spend our time together at 9:00 pm, we're tired but it gives us three hours to hang out and that is our quality "together" time. We really look forward to this time when we can finish a sentence without saying 'I'll tell you later' and without being distracted. It's really about carving out time and it gives you a goal and something to look forward to each day. You don't need to go out to spend quality time. In fact, we have more fun hanging out together at home when the kids are sleeping then trying to coordinate babysitting, taking time to go out and spending a bunch of money in the process.

TWINS — What is the biggest life-lesson you have learned so far from parenting multiple-multiples?

Kate: The biggest life-lesson for us would probably be: don't ever try to plan your life because it plans you! You just have to learn to take one day at a time. There is not a set manual. After having twins, nobody ever thinks they will have a set of six after that. In our situation, time is fleeting and memories are never enough. I really want to learn who they are individually and uniquely and just want to grab time.

TWINS — If you could, would you change the way you did anything? How?

Kate: From the beginning, I would have learned I needed people and would have been kinder to people that were reaching out to help. I would have also changed the way I verbalized to people when I was tired because it usually did not come out the way I wanted and I sounded pretty grouchy. I wish I knew then what I know now. I am better equipped now and can be honest with the people in our lives. We had a lot of help from the community and from strangers that were willing to help. Because we were dealing with premies and reflux and the babies had to be held upright for an hour, Jon and I couldn't do it on our own. I know that things would have been a little easier if

I could have accepted people's help. I maybe learned a little too late, that I couldn't always accept the help in the manner they were offering but now I have learned to tell them how we could use their help.

TWINS — How has having a reality show on TLC changed your life?

Kate: The crews have been around since the babies were 16 months old and everyone just absolutely loves the crew. We have never stopped filming since August 2005 and it just feels so normal to us. One thing that has changed is that people actually drive by and take pictures of us. We always get people responding to us because they have never seen sextuplets before and it's nice that people know what everyone's names are and are supportive when they make comments to us. ♥



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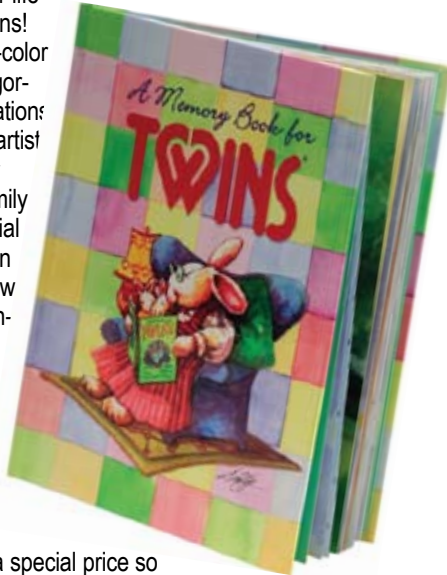


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TWIN HEARTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At last I stroke each newborn face,
I knew my heart was touched by grace.

My hands now full-as most will say,
Yet my life never richer than today.

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

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

~ By Teri Harrison

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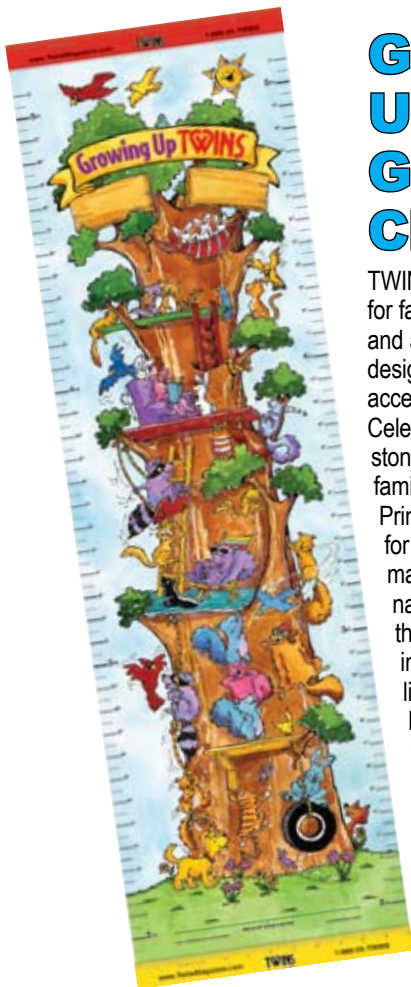
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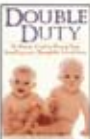
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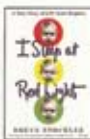
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hand using a food processor we brought with us and cereal which we would mix with the formula to soften it up. Disposable bibs are a must because you will be using a lot of them!

Tips to get around in the airports and in Italy... we used a lightweight Peg Perego double stroller especially made for twins, which we found more accessible for travelling. The girls stayed in the stroller in the airport right until they boarded our Eurostar flight. For most of the trip, the stroller was perfect to walk the streets of Florence and Orvieto, although we did also use a backpack once when we went for a walk. We found our kids weren't use to it, so, ultimately, the stroller was the perfect accessory especially when the twins needed to take their morning and afternoon naps. The first few days, your babies will suffer jetlag just like any adult. So be prepared for shifts in their sleeping patterns. What helped us was getting to the airport early and reserving two bassinets. There are usually only two on the entire plane, and that helped immensely as the girls were able to sleep comfortably rather than in each parent's arms and it gave us a chance to sleep a little bit as well!

As far as the two properties we stayed at, we requested cribs be ready in advance. Nonetheless, it still took about three days for our twins to adjust to their new environment along with their jetlag. During the day, they were too stimulated to nap, but if they needed to, they'd just take naps in the stroller as they slowly returned to their regular schedule. Although we will never forget our trip to Italy with our two bundles of joy, if we were to plan the trip again, we would definitely do a lot more research in advance for emergency contact information, most notably, to know what the 911 numbers were for medical, police and fire departments for the country we would be visiting. We'd also find out where the nearby hospitals were and find out what the best cell phone providers were so we could ensure reliable service. It's important to have a cell phone with you at all times in case of emergencies. In hindsight, eight months is a great age to travel with your kids as they aren't walking yet and are great in the strollers. We recommend every parent, traveling or not, to take an infant [till one year of age] and toddler [one year and older] CPR course. Our younger daughter, Annabelle, had acid reflux, which at the time we weren't aware she had. So, it was important to take the course to avoid any panic and know how to personally take, what could be, life-saving action. Every parent knows their child best and should think about the possibilities. For example, we knew at the time our daughters could get mucus build up so we brought items she may need with us as a precaution. ♥

TWINS™ Events Calendar - May/June 2008

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

May

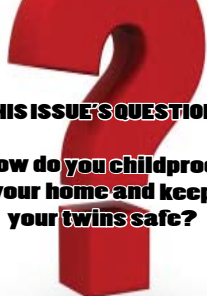
- **Georgia Organization of Mothers of Multiples, Inc.**, May 10, Stone Mountain Theme Park, Atlanta, GA. www.stonemountainpark.com. For further information please visit www.gomomc.org or contact gomomc@hotmail.com
- **Southern California Association of Mothers of Twins Clubs**, May 16-18, Anaheim, CA "Surf's Up Mom!" president@scmotc.org
- **Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey Twin Night**, May 2, 8:00 p.m. The 2008 season begins with one of Shakespeare's most beloved comedies, *The Comedy of Errors*. Two sets of identical twins, separated at birth, find themselves in the same city, on the same fast-paced, bewildering day in Shakespeare's riotous farce of wild misadventures and mistaken identities. Twins who attend the performance on May 2nd can purchase one ticket and get the second ticket for their twin for free!



June

- **2nd Annual Southwest Twins and Multiples Festival** at Community Center Park, Prescott Valley, AZ, Saturday, June 16. A festival for multiples and families with a parade and talent show. For info contact Mary Topero at mtopero@hotmail.com. This event is for multiples of all ages and their families. Bring your own picnic and drinks. Pregristration encouraged.
- **Desert Sky Association of Mothers of Multiples Clubs**, June 7, Phoenix, AZ "Serindipity" www.dsmom.com or jennifer@ailaz.com
- **The Southwest Twins and Multiples Connection**, June 21, Prescott Valley, AZ. Call 928-759-0760 for details
- **The Annual Texas Twins Round-Up**, June 22, Houston, TX. The largest gathering of twins, triplets and their families in the Southwest held annually at Minute Maid Park. Details at www.twinstuff.com/roundup
- **Michigan Twins Association (MTA)**, 62nd Annual Convention, June 27-29 Port Huron, MI Jannlifsey@peoplepc.com
- **Indiana Federation of Mothers of Twins Clubs**, June 27-29, 50th Anniversary, Muncie, IN "Traveling Through the Years" crichard4401@comcast.net

ATTENTION TWINS™ MAGAZINE READERS...



THIS ISSUE'S QUESTION:

How do you childproof your home and keep your twins safe?

Please send your responses with one photo to: reader.responses@twinsmagazine.com and we will try and include as many as possible in the July/August 2008 issue.

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The Invitation



The inevitable happened in our house this evening. As a mom of twins, I always knew it would happen, and it finally did. I wasn't expecting it tonight though (next year would have been better) — it just kind of happened — like a flat tire or a hole in my sock. The phone rang and an innocent little voice named Ben asked for my son, Peter. Ben's little voice had a mom as a backup big voice calling to ask Peter to spend the night on Friday. The arrangements were made and I was left with Andrew's crestfallen, heartbroken face when he realized he had not been similarly situated with an invitation.

Surely I lost a year or two looking at Andrew's face; watching him stomp up the stairs, slam his door then climb into the top bunk, just beyond reach. Despite the histrionics, he recovered quickly and Andrew decided to make his own plans and maybe have someone spend the night at our house. Ironically he wants to invite his friends who are twins — both of them.

After Andrew emerged from his room, at dinner we talked a bit. I said, as I am oh, so wise, "You know, you won't go to the same college. You'll get married. You can't be together all the time." Andrew shrieked at the thought. Peter hollered back, "I'll be sick of you by then." Andrew offered, "We can get married and live in a duplex. A duplex with a door in between so we can visit. Maybe we can play cards with the door open." Peter was rolling his eyes. We've talked about it before, but I said again, "You know you're two different people. You don't do everything the same, you don't think the same, and you can do different things. Certainly you don't have to live in a duplex." They thought about that for a moment and Andrew said, "Are you sure he isn't just another Andrew?" Peter said, "Are you sure he's not another Peter?"

As an innocent bystander and occasional victim of their relationship, it's my observation that it's a very interesting thing being a twin. When Andrew and Peter were little they would sit together on the couch all wrapped up, arms and legs in a pile like spaghetti noodles, twirling each other's hair. They never realized they were twirling the hair on the other's head. As they grow, it almost seems like a loss of something special as they begin to realize they really are not one in the same.

For them, together or apart, the other half is there, but simply not attached. Early in their schooling, Andrew decided to forgo learning the alphabet because Peter already knew it and it gave him more time to play if Peter was doing the schoolwork. Likewise, Andrew is the brave one and Peter always lets him go first into the river or down the slide figuring if Andrew doesn't get injured, maimed or eaten by an unseen river creature, it's probably a safe activity.

Just this year, after a spring soccer season of listening from the sidelines to the boys mercilessly harangue each other (You missed that? You're not in position! You're a bonehead!), we decided separate soccer teams might be worth a shot. Two fall soccer teams were hard on them both — especially Andrew. He came home from the first practice and melted into a teary puddle, "I just can't do it without Peter." Of course, he picked himself up and did just fine — twice defeating Peter's team rather handily.

Can anyone ever be as close to you as your twin? I can't imagine anyone knowing me better than myself — someone who is essentially you, but in some different skin and maybe the clothes you had on yesterday because they were conveniently left on the floor in the hallway. Andrew and Peter have been together since the very beginning in that initial twist of statistical fate that made one into two. Always really together, even when he's sleeping down the hall, he's right there. He knows everything about you and you him.

Before bed tonight Andrew told Peter, "I really want you to spend the night at Ben's. I'll find something else to do even if I have to spend it with Mom and Dad (gee, thanks). Besides, this will be a good experience for you." Clearly he's trying to convince himself and maybe me too, as much as Peter. Peter asked, "Do you think Ben's mom realizes there's another kid at our house just like me?" When we invite the other twins over, we'll be sure to invite them both. ♡



Jennifer's twin sons, Peter and Andrew.



Not Always Identical: When Twins Differ in Abilities

By Christina Baglivi Tinglof

When my fraternal twin boys were in the second grade, I noticed that one son was having trouble learning to read. When we snuggled together for our nightly story, each taking a turn reading a page out loud, Michael read his passage quickly and flawlessly while Joseph struggled to decode the words on the page in front of him. He became frustrated easily, too, especially when his twin would try to help him sound out the words. During a teacher-parent conference later that year, his teacher confirmed our suspicions. Joseph was reading more than two grade levels below the rest of his class.

For us, there were two serious issues at play. First, we needed to assess why Joseph was having problems reading and then get him the help he needed. Second, and we felt equally important; we needed to make sure that it wouldn't affect the boys' relationship. We wanted Michael to be able to take pride in his ability to read without fear that he would hurt his brother's feelings. Conversely, we didn't want Joseph to feel less-than Michael or resent him for how easily reading came to him. We were about to traverse a very slippery slope indeed.

COMPARISONS CAN HURT

To the outside world, twins may seem the same (or at least very similar). Yet parents of twins know all too well that their children come into this world as very different little beings.

"Just like any siblings, twins have their own personalities, interests and abilities, so differences between them are quite common. And the older they get, the more these unique characteristics become apparent," explained Susan Heim, author of *It's Twins! Parent-to-Parent Advice from Infancy Through Adolescence*, and the mother of four sons including four-year-old fraternal twin boys. "Unfortunately, this can be more of a problem for twins than it is for other siblings as people have a tendency to compare twins more or expect them to be exactly the same."

These differences are even more apparent to parents of fraternal twins since genetically they're no more alike than any two siblings born years apart. Yet fraternal twins are different than singletons of different ages. Twins grow up together, not only sharing a birthday but also reaching many developmental and physical milestones simultaneously giving the illusion to many that they are in fact the same. So when twins differ in their abilities, be it in school or playing sports, it's more apparent to everyone, even the twins themselves.

Parents whose twins are at opposite ends of the academic or sports spectrum, however, should fight the urge to compare the two, especially in their presence. Not only can open comparisons hurt the less-performing twin's self-esteem but it can set up the pair for unhealthy competition. ("Mom says I'm a better speller than you!" "Oh, yeah? Well, Dad told me I'm a better ball player!") Instead try to view each child's accomplishments and strengths individually. Teach them to celebrate their differences rather than competing over them. And while it's fine to praise the more-accomplished twin in front of his co-twin, be cognizant of when your compliments are hurting the less-able twin's self image and instead offer congratulations for a job well done in private.

"We make a sincere effort to not diminish the achievements of the 'excelling' twin while continuing to encourage the endeavors of the

'practicing-and-maybe-just-simply-enjoying' twin," explained Cheryl Lage, author of *Twinspirations: Real-Life Advice from Pregnancy Through the First Year*, and mother to six-year-old boy-girl twins. Although her son is a stronger reader, her daughter is an exceptional artist. Lage uses words of praise with both regardless of whose performance is outstanding. "We gravitate towards compliments and positive reinforcements such as 'Sarah you did such a great job on that poster!' and 'Darren your color choices are so pretty!' Or, 'Darren you read that whole book by yourself. Great job!' and 'Sarah you figured out that word by sounding it out, and it was a long one!'" In doing so, Lage takes the focus off of succeeding or "winning" and instead concentrates on effort.

Furthermore, Lage stresses to her children that everyone has unique talents. "We make a point to include our tales of successes and lesser performances," said Lage. "Mommy was a good artist but I was always last in the 600 yard dash. I always tried to improve and do my best, and I did get better. Whether I won or not wasn't as important as my efforts." Parents can take it a step further and try to help their struggling twin find an area all his own in which to shine separate from his co-twin. Try persuading your struggling twin to take music or art lessons, for example, or enroll her in martial arts, a sport that builds self confidence and pro-social behavior. When a child is allowed to "own" an activity separate from a co-twin, the pride she feels often spills over in other areas of her life. Once out from under the shadow of a co-twin, she may make a turnaround improving in other areas where she once struggled.

CONSIDER CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Nothing causes more stress for families with multiples than when there's a gap in academic achievement between twins. Still, if you think that one twin

is struggling in school, it may or may not mean that there's a problem. "It may just be a sign that a different approach is needed," Heim said. She recommends looking at classroom placement first to see if that is having an effect on performance. "If your twins are in the same classroom and one is struggling, you might want to consider placing them in different classes. In this way, teachers and children are less likely to compare them and your twins are less likely to compare themselves with each other. On the other hand, if your twins are very bonded and have been placed in separate classrooms, one may be doing poorly because she's separated from her twin. In this case, you may need to speak with the administration to see if they'll allow them to share a classroom again."

Karen Calvert, a first-grade teacher from Livonia, Michigan, has seen this at work first hand. "When twins are together, the one who is struggling is dependent on the other too much. Separating them allows each the chance to develop their own talents, and allows the teacher to assess the needs of each child." Furthermore, Calvert explains, the more 'able' twin gets a break as well. "By separating them, the more 'able' twin is also taken out of the role of caregiver for a few hours of the day and allowed to develop her own talents and not feel so responsible for helping her sibling. The twin that struggles more can learn to rely on herself, too, and be less dependent upon her twin."

Next, Heim suggests conferencing with your struggling twin's teacher to see if learning style plays a role. "Perhaps the struggling twin is more of a visual learner and could benefit from the use of flashcards at home or other techniques that complement visual learning," Heim said. Sometimes a change in where the child sits in the classroom may have an impact, too. If she can't see the board clearly or hear the teacher, she's more apt to tune out and lose focus. Still, a child who is significantly lagging behind his peers scholastically should be formally tested to determine if there is in fact a learning problem. The sooner he's assessed and then given the professional help he needs, the better chance of remediation. "Early intervention is important if a child is struggling," added Heim. "You don't want him to get so frustrated with school that he simply gives up." However, it's important for parents not to take their child's struggles personally. "Sometimes the biggest delay in getting help for the struggling twin is denial by the parents," Calvert explained. "They take a few years to admit the problem, which delays some of the interventions that could have been offered sooner."

LENDING SUPPORT AND LOVE

Finding what works for your struggling twin is a top priority but it shouldn't be the sole focus of your family life. While getting the help he needs is paramount, celebrating his strengths whatever they may be is equally important. In our situation, testing revealed that Joseph had an auditory processing disorder. Through the help of a tutor and a few changes within the classroom setting and at home, Joseph, now in sixth grade, reads at a tenth grade level. That makes us all very proud including Joseph and his co-twin, Michael. ♥

HELP BEGINS AT HOME

When a child struggles academically or has a hard time developing his gross motor skills making him hesitant to join a sports team, family support can make a huge difference. Here are some tips to help your twins at home. Offer privacy. Find a secluded spot within the home for each child to study on his own away from the prying eyes of a co-twin. In our house, we separated the boys for their nightly reading, too. Michael was then free to read at will while Joseph could take his time getting extra help in sounding out words and phrases. Make use of the Internet and computer games. These days there are a host of educational and fun software to help students falling behind on reading and math skills. (We used a computer program called Earobics, www.earobics.com.)

GET GAME FRIENDLY

Next time you hit the road to visit Grandma's house, take along some flashcards—sight words and arithmetic—for the long ride. (Mad Libs, a great word game, is a solid choice as well.) Pull out the Scrabble board on a Friday night, and let the kids have 10 letter tiles instead of the usual seven, or play any other game that involves reading or math.

Concentrate on building sports skills. Play a game of catch after dinner or hit the batting cages on a Saturday afternoon. When kids practice sports within a loving, non-judgmental environment it not only gives them confidence but builds their competence as well. Be a supportive family. Praise your kids when they complement each other's successes. Remind them that they're not adversaries but teammates.



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*, available from the TWINS Parenting Bookshelf at www.Twins-Magazine.com/parenting.html. Christina's website is www.talk-about-twins.com.

Double Takes

Can you guess whether the same-sex 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).



1

Aidan & Deacon
9 Months
Centennial, CO



4

Alexandra & Alina
4 Years
Clovis, CA



5

Niko & Kyle
1 Year
Durham, NC



6

Casey & Jacob
2.5 Months
Vero Beach, FL



10

Courtney & Cash
8 Months
Grand Junction, CO



11

Erica & Brendon
7 Months
Ft. McMurry, Alberta,



12

Joshua & Samuel
2 Years
Syracuse, NY



16

Kailey & Colin
3 Months
Bolton, Ontario, Canada



17

Katharina & Rebeckah
5 Years
Aurora, CO



18

Kristen & Halley
14 Months
Cincinnati



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2

Ava & Sophia
8.5 Months
Arlington, VA

3

Taren & Travis
3 Months
Corpus Christi, TX



7

Nolan & Dylan
3 Months
Milbury, MA



8

Michael & Lilley
1 Day Old
Porell, OH



9

JoHannah & Carly
3 3/4 Years
Winterport, ME



13

Judd & Jett
18 Months
Phoenix, MD



14

Matthew & Lauren
4 Months
Coon Rapids, MN



15

Joseph & Anthony
3 Years
Cumming, GA



19

Zander & Zakk
5 Years
Bayville, NJ



20

MacKenzi & Madison
2.5 Months
Englewood, CO

Based on parental reports:

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

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No Psychic - Just a Vision

After reading my daughter's description of my psychic abilities in the last issue of TWINS™ Magazine, I thought it was necessary to relate the true case of how I knew that the birth of twins was in store for her and her husband before they even went to the doctor. She related in her column about the events and how I told her upon my return from England that she was going to have twins, which she didn't believe at the time. This was true but alas, I am no psychic.

As a scientist, I have been interested in how the Indians of the past could foretell the events of the future. After many years of research, I came to realize that through their visions, they understood what was

to come. How many of you have ever had déjà vu? You know, the times when you experienced something that you had experienced before? At some time you had a dream or vision that you only remembered after it happened again. I started to train myself on remembering my dreams or visions. On several different occasions, I actually did forecast something that was going to happen before it actually happened. In fact in 2000, I had a vision that my wife was going to get cancer but I could not explain the vision until after she actually was diagnosed and that is when I saw the meaning of the vision I had previously seen.

The vision I had about my twin grandsons occurred on a warm summer day with an outstanding blue sky. I was sitting on a park bench after a very long walk along the canal in Nottingham when I drifted off and had my dream about the coming of the twins. It was as clear as the blue sky that I was sitting under and I knew they would be arriving soon. Then, when I returned home and my daughter informed me that she was pregnant, I of course replied,

"I know." She became upset with her mother for telling me and I told her that mom had not said a word. I then informed her, "Not only are you pregnant but you are going to have twins." She then asked me how I knew and I related that I had this vision and I knew from that. She of course didn't believe me (as you read in the last issue) until she went to the doctor and found out that she was actually going to have twins and that my vision was real and true.

I then sat down and documented the event so when the twins came and were able to read, they would have something that told them about their Granddad's capability to turn visions into reality. I wrote the following poem, which was even published in an anthology called "Rustling Leaves." No I'm not a psychic; I'm just an experimentalist who is trying to discover how to read visions. The poem is included to the left. ♥

Above photo: James (on left) and Nick Reed hang out on their granddad's lap in 1997. The boys are one-year-old in the picture.



By Rod Beach

Double Vision

A vision came to me one day while in a land so far away.

The vision showed that twins were here;
two boys so very small and dear.

My youngest daughter was holding them;
cuddled in blankets with bright blue trim.

Informed upon return a Grandfather I was to be;

I knew all about it, the vision you see.

I told my family that I already knew,
and the blessed event was not one, but two.

They were surprised since they thought of one;
but the doctor said, "No you have two sons".

Now we begin to prepare for the birth of twins;
gathering supplies from all our kin.

We look forward to the birthing day
with apprehension since some will say
That the vision so clear that came to me
was a sign of greatness for the two to be.

A sign from God that all is well,
a message that only God could tell.

Rod Beach-1997

Searching everywhere for the greatest twin stroller?

Here's one stroller you shouldn't pass by! Weighing only 32 pounds and a measuring a slim 29 inches in width, the Urban Double Mountain Buggy has two swiveling front wheels that provide excellent maneuverability. The 12-inch air-filled tires and shock absorbers provide a smooth ride and the fully padded seats can be independently set at angles from upright to nearly horizontal. The Urban Double unfolds with a single hand, and parents will appreciate the spacious storage basket, cup holder and numerous pockets.

Here's what readers are saying about the Urban Double Mountain Buggy:

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

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

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

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

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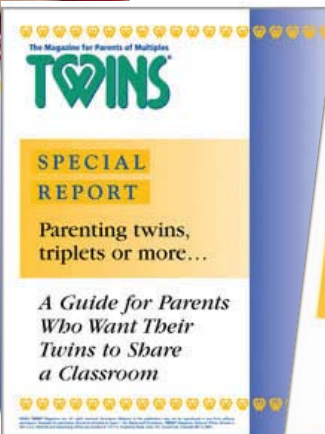
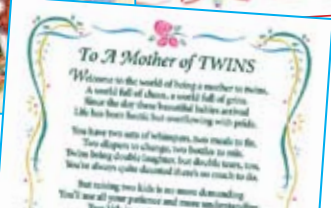
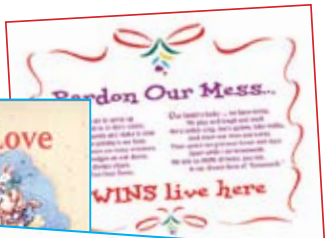
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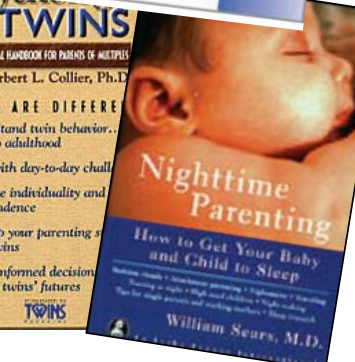
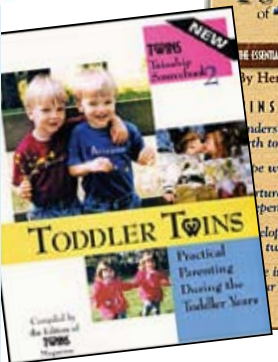


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