

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

# TWINS™

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**Lightening  
Can Strike  
the Same Place  
Twice—with  
Two Sets of  
Twins!**

**Traveling with  
Twins Without  
Breaking the Bank!**

**Are You a True  
Parent of Multiples?  
Take Our Quiz!**

**Cover Contest Winners &  
Honorable Mentions  
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On the Cover: Our Cover Contest Winners, Kayla & Chelsey are 8-months-old from Denver, Colorado. All cover contest photos taken at our National Multiple Birth Awareness event were taken by Betsy Strafach from Portraits by Betsy, [www.portraitsbybetsy.com](http://www.portraitsbybetsy.com).

# Can You Spare Some Change?

Change is definitely in the air these days... Even here at TWINS™ Magazine we have felt the effects of change as we celebrate 25 years as the definitive resource on parenting multiples with a proud tradition of helping thousands of families across the globe throughout the years. As with many businesses today, the current tough economic climate has forced us to evaluate ways we can survive and remain sustainable while also continuing to publish this useful parenting tool for all of you. Therefore, we have determined that the very best way for us to be sustainable and continue publishing TWINS™ Magazine in the future was to transition from a bi-monthly print schedule to a quarterly print schedule and print four issues per year beginning with this Summer 2009 edition. By moving to a quarterly publication, TWINS™ Magazine will be there to cover each and every season of your multiples' lives when published in the summer, fall, winter and spring each year. We can assure you that this transition will not affect the amount of issues you are currently subscribed to receive. For example, if you subscribed for one-year or (6) six issues, you will still receive (6) six issues but it will be spread out over a year and a half. The same goes for subscribers that have signed up to receive 12 and 18 issues (formerly two and three year subscriptions). Our goal is to make this a smooth and seamless transition for you and we appreciate your continued loyalty and support of TWINS™ Magazine.

For me personally, our family is also experiencing some change. My twin boys just finished their 5th grade year and their final year of elementary school. This fall they will be moving on to (big boy school) or middle school. I must admit that the thought of sending them off to the land of cell phones, hormones and pre-teen attitudes is something we are reluctantly preparing ourselves to experience. By the time they get to middle school, this means that as parents we need to relinquish the great control we have had over every aspect of their lives and now allow them the freedom to make their own choices and even give them the opportunity to make some mistakes and learn from them. It's much like when they were toddlers and learning to walk for the first time. I can remember following them around... waiting, watching their every move and

my overwhelming desire to protect them from the harsh realities of the floor.

Not much has changed in that regard... I still have that overwhelming desire to protect them from the harsh realities of life so they don't fall. But then I have to realize that if I am always there to swoop in and save them by solving their problems or making sure they never get their feelings hurt or let them feel what it's like to lose that big game, then how will they ever learn that life is tough and filled with ups and downs and successes and failures, too?

One of my most favorite stories about failure is Thomas Edison and the invention of the light bulb. He tried over 10,000 times to find a workable solution yet failed every time before finally getting it right. He never gave up and always persevered. The way he approached this was that he successfully discovered 10,000 ways NOT to make a light bulb and not 10,000 failures.

Think about your own life's journey... some of the most difficult and challenging times you have experienced in your life have probably forced you to learn something and move forward with a deeper understanding of that issue. By allowing your children to make their own mistakes and even experience failure from time to time teaches them to not give up, to persevere and to do better the next time. If we are always there to protect them and we never let them fall, when will they ever learn to pull themselves up, brush themselves off and eventually walk alone?

I hope you have a wonderful and safe summer and take time to enjoy those precious moments you have with your family in the midst of all the summer activities, plans and organized chaos!

Sincerely,



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



# TWINS™

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~ Founded in 1984 ~

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# Twin Star Spotlight: The Carter Twins



By Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

*Meet up-and-coming country music stars...identical twins Josh and Zach Carter, age 19 (they think they are identical but since their mom had an emergency c-section they actually never found out for sure!)*

**Q:** When is your birthday?

**A:** March 1, 1990.

**Q:** Where did you grow up?

**A:** Akron, Ohio area

**Q:** Where do you live now?

**A:** Nashville, Tennessee

**Q:** What would you both say is the very best thing about being a twin?

**A:** We do this thing called “twin me”—we are really good at finishing each others sentences. It’s especially helpful during interviews, and it doesn’t hurt when we’re writing songs either.

**Q:** What would you both say is the worst thing about being a twin?

**A:** It can be frustrating to have people constantly mix us up. It’s not as bad now, but it still happens.

**Q:** When growing up, what was the most memorable birthday celebration you had?

**A:** CMT just held a big party for us on our 19th birthday at

their headquarters in Nashville. That was pretty cool.

**Q:** Were you both in the same or different classrooms growing up?

**A:** Different classes.

**Q:** Did you have the same interests and participate in the same activities or did you like completely opposite activities?

**A:** We had some of the same interests. We both loved music growing up and played some sports.

**Q:** Did you ever feel like you were in constant competition with one another? If so, can you provide an example?

**A:** Yes, all the time! When we began writing songs, it was really a competition to see who could get the most attention from girls. Every time one of us would write a song, we would invite the girls from the neighborhood to come listen to it at our house. It became a constant competition to see who could outdo the

other for the girls’ attention so that is how this all got started!

**Q:** At what age did you begin singing/playing music?

**A:** We both began playing instruments at the age of 13 and we both started performing in musical theater starting around age ten.

**Q:** Who were your main musical influences?

**A:** Josh: John Mayer, Keith Urban, Brad Paisley, Brooks & Dunn. Zach: Gavin DeGraw, Rascal Flatts, Simon & Garfunkel, and the Everly Brothers.

**Q:** Can you tell us what you both are up to these days?

**A:** We just finished our first record which is due out in August. Frank Rogers, who was named one of Country’s top producers by Billboard magazine, produced the record so we are really proud of it. We wrote all the songs on the record with the exception of “Heart Like Memphis,” which is our first single. We also just launched our second video May 12th on CMT called “So What,” which is fun because it showcases our goofy personalities. We were excited to attend the CMA Fest in Nashville in June and the CMT Awards on June 16th. We were nominated for two awards: Best Duo Video and Breakthrough Video of the Year so that is very exciting! Also, we have some great opening slots for country stars like Toby Keith and Phil Vassar this summer that we’re looking forward to.

*I’m sure this won’t be the last we will be hearing from these two! You can learn more about these dynamic and talented twins by visiting their official website at: [www.cartertwins.com](http://www.cartertwins.com), or by going to: [cmt.com](http://cmt.com) or [myspace.com/cartertwins](http://myspace.com/cartertwins) to see pictures, purchase merchandise, see their videos, and to hear their music. ♥*

## Summer 2009

### Reader Faced with Difficult Decision to Split up Twins in Separate Grades!

Dear Ms. Reed:

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for a while now and have found the information quite beneficial. My husband and I are the proud parents of 5-year-old fraternal twin girls (they will be 6 on Aug. 6, due date was Sept. 1). They are currently in kindergarten at a private school here in Mississippi and are separated by classroom, which has been good for them. Previously, they have been in the same classes for PK3 and PK4. They are some of the youngest in their classes, if not the youngest. We are faced with a difficult decision! One of the girls is not as mature or up with her class in socialization, reading and speech skills, she is also the youngest by five months; while the other, also the youngest in her class, is a leader in her classroom and is progressing smoothly. We know in our hearts that to hold the less mature one back will be wonderful for her; however,

the other one is what I am worried about. My worry is I know she will feel it! She is popular. I also think they are just 5, will they feel this as much as I am worried about it? What will happen if you separate by grade? I worried about them psychologically. These are our only children. I have read your publication on education but could not find this topic. I hope you can have an answer for us on anyone that has contemplated this same dilemma and let us know some pros and cons of it. Ms. Reed, we are desperate for advice and the school has some time restraints. *Name Withheld*

### Family with Dramatically Different Twins Sends Feedback!

Dear Editor:

Thank you for including a photo of our twin girls in the last issue of Double Takes. We have been told many times our twins are like night and day! When my girls were born, who would have thought they would look so completely opposite of each other? All parents of twins realize personalities can be dramatically different from one twin to the other, which we are experiencing with Alyssa and Julia, as well as their total opposite appearance!

Alyssa, our blonde-haired, blue-eyed little girl gets her coloring from my mom's side

of the family. Her personality is as fair as her appearance. From her sensitive skin that breaks out in a rash at the drop of a hat, her sensitive, gentle spirit, to her nurturing and loving self. She is always quick to smile and quick to cry. Her sensitivity is evident in everything she does.

Julia, who takes after both of her grandfathers is our dark-haired, brown-eyed little one, and is younger by one minute than her twin. She is our tough little girl, who needs to be poked to get a smile out of her. She is busy taking in the world with all her seriousness, and will talk non-stop well after our other children are fast asleep. When it comes to food, Alyssa will gently and daintily pick at what is on her plate. Julia, on the other hand, seriously commits to focusing on flavors, variety and quantity! They both love and adore their big brother, Kyle, whose is always quick to lend a hand. After the girls were



## Monthly 'Multiples' Winners

March Twin CuteKid winners



Fallyn and Kailyn from Fayetteville, NC

April Twin CuteKid winners



Bo Ashton and Brady Lee from Osprey, FL

Learn more about how to sign up for this fun online photo contest by visiting: [www.TwinsMagazine.com/theCuteKidContest](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com/theCuteKidContest) for monthly chances to win money, prizes, talent & casting exposure & more! Plus, winners of the 2009 contest will grace the cover of TWINS Magazine in 2010!

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born and Daddy went back to work, Kyle was Mommy's wonderful helper. As such, we believe his sisters have an unbelievable love and trust in him because he was so attentive from very early in their lives. Interesting, the girls do share many of Kyle's traits!

Because our girls look so different, we have been asked many amusing questions and had comments made from those we know as well as from complete strangers, including: Are they identical? When they get older will they become identical? Are my husband and I biracial? Are they sisters? Are they really twins? Alyssa and Julia actually look very much alike, just with opposite coloring. Regardless of their differences in appearance, or how differently they act, or what people might think or say, we wouldn't have them any other way! I would love to hear from other parents that have completely different twins, too! ~Lori Beveridge

## Reader is Pleased with Changes to the Magazine & Website!

Dear Christa,

I just wanted to drop you an e-mail to let you know how pleased I am with the changes you've

made to the magazine and website. I am currently a stay-at-home mom, but pre-

vious to that I was an editor working in medical publishing. I was considering not renewing my subscription to the magazine because of all the errors I would find. I'm glad I decided to renew it. I found the articles in the current issue well written and interesting. Keep up the good work! *Sincerely, Victoria Bruno, Mother of identical girl twins, Juliana & Gabriella (12/3/05)*



## Article on Cloth Diapers Misjudged Actual Costs of Using Disposables!

Dear Editor:

I liked the article about cloth diapers, but it just seems that cloth diaper users consistently misjudge the actual cost of disposable diapers. She talked about \$400 for three months! We spent \$30 a month, including

wipes. There are a lot of other options than just expensive named brands diapers out there... and nowhere did she mention the cost of detergent or those flushable inserts for cloth diapers. I'd really like to see a realistic comparison of prices of cloth diapers versus disposables, so that moms of multiples could make their decision based on real numbers. I saw one online once, and it showed that if you buy generic/on sale disposables, it's almost as cheap as cloth, with much less work involved (although you obviously can't recover part of the cost by selling them back when you're done!). ~Fran Levi

## Reader from Canada Thinks TWINS™ Magazine is Wonderfully Unique!

Dear Editor:

I just wanted to let you know that TWINS™ Magazine is one of the most wonderfully unique magazines on the market today. In addition to being a faithful reader and subscriber, I'm the mother of three-year-old twin girls who came into the world under some extremely challenging medical circumstances. I can't emphasize enough how important your publication is to my family and me. TWINS™ Magazine is an invaluable resource of information for us. It's also our connection to the amazing stories and lives of other similar families. Every issue is filled with educational articles, entertaining features, and the latest news on all topics relevant to raising multiples.



Although I read every issue from cover to cover, I always get started by jumping straight to the Double Takes photo gallery. I am so excited that my twin girls will be pictured in Double Takes. It will be such a huge thrill to see them in my favorite section smiling alongside so many other dynamic duos. I find that many other parenting periodicals are simply devices to induce people to read advertising. That's not the case with TWINS™. It's a truly special publication that provides twice the value

of anything else on the magazine stands. I look forward to the continued enjoyment of receiving your magazine for many years to come. Keep up the good work. *Angela Shirshac, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada*

## Adult Twins Want to Share Experience with TWINS™ Magazine Readers!

Dear Editor:

I came across your magazine and wanted to share with you a picture of my sister and I all grown up. Obviously we're twins, but I thought maybe it would give readers with babies or small children something to think about and look forward to (when their children

grow up). It's funny seeing the pictures of twin babies and remembering all the moments my sister and I had

growing up and think about how these kids will have just as much fun. We're 26 now and working in professional careers and it's amazing how many times my parents have told us time flies and they can't believe we're now independent adults! LOL! *Take care, Melissa Borrack*



## Twin Sisters are Accomplished Athletes at the Age of 12!

Dear TWINS™ Editor,

My name is Michelle Rodriguez and I am a twin mom from Royal Palm Beach, Florida. (Wow! that read like I was on a twelve step program...) My twin daughters are accomplished athletes. I wanted to highlight my daughters' accomplishments and offer advice to other parents. Alexys & Alyssa attended the AAU Junior Olympics back in 2004 as black belts in Tae Kwon Do. They each brought home two gold medals and two silver medals. In the mean time, they also participated in other sports for their school, such as basketball (their team was District

~ Continued on Page 54

# Twins in the News...



## The Montreal 'Just for Laughs' Festival to Host 12th Annual Twins Weekend July 18-19, 2009

—Every summer, Montreal comes alive when 'Just For Laughs – The Montreal International Comedy Festival' takes the city by storm. Taking place from July 16 to 26, 2009 the festival is THE PLACE for the funniest most hilarious, most entertaining and most original comedy the world has to offer. For the past 12 years, the Twins Weekend has been an annual Canadian event giving the opportunity for twins, triplets and more to meet and interact. Twins of all ages and twin types are welcome. The twin event traditionally takes place during the last weekend of the

*Just for Laughs Festival.* This year, the event will be held on Saturday, July 18 and Sunday July 19. Many activities are organized for twins/multiples including dinners, shows, a VIP brunch, look-a-like and costume contests, animation and various other activities. The main activity of the twins weekend is the famous Twins Parade which will take place Saturday, July 18 at 4:00 p.m.

Event organizers are expecting more than 2,000 sets of twins as well as 250,000 viewers and journalists. Here is a line-up of the comedy stars scheduled to perform at this year's festival: John Cleese; Lewis Black; Bill Cosby; Tommy Tiernan; Russell Peters; Whoopi Goldberg and Martin Short. For more info on the *Just For Laughs Festival* please visit [www.hahaha.com](http://www.hahaha.com).



## Entrepreneurial Family with Twins Releases New Hit iPhone Game

—The Pfindner family with seven young children ranging in age from 3 to 15 (three adopted children, and four biological children including a set of twins) announced the launch of SORT-IT, their new game for play on the iPhone and iPod Touch (2nd generation). The game received a quick approval by Apple on March 6th and is growing in popularity with game lovers of all ages. SORT-IT has a 5-Star rating by players and can be downloaded for only \$1.99 in iTunes by Apple or at [www.mightyideas.com](http://www.mightyideas.com). Nick and Sharon Pfindner run an online jewelry business. Having a home business and supporting a family of nine is a daunting task, especially in this challenging economy. "I always tell my children when life gives you lemons; make lemonade," says proud father, Nick. "With the jewelry industry really slowing down, it became a great time to really demonstrate this. So I pulled from my design and programming back-

ground, and we decided as a family to develop a new game for the iPhone."

SORT-IT is a true family collaboration, and Apple's open environment made the development for the iPhone and iPod their first and only choice. With Apple's iTunes App Store, you don't have to be a large game development company to develop an application.

Even individuals and families like the Pfindners can get involved. SORT-IT challenges users to sort objects that are coming down an accelerating conveyor belt. It seems simple enough, but the ten different levels and endless combinations test even expert gamers with varied shapes, colors, depths, and designs. "With my dad's design background, he often tells these great stories of focus groups and the research that goes into products," said eldest son Dean. "I told my dad that with seven kids we have our own focus group right here in the house." "Our family has played hundreds and hundreds of games," exclaimed son Tanner. "SORT-IT is totally new – it's like nothing we've ever seen or played before."

The Pfindners live in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and are looking forward to creating other versions of SORT-IT. To learn more go to [www.mightyideas.com](http://www.mightyideas.com).



## 1st National Multiple Birth Awareness Event in April was a Giant Success!

—There were over 500 people in attendance at the very first Multiples Family Festival hosted by the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) in conjunction with TWINS™ Magazine, the Fetal Hope Foundation and the



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Colorado Parents of Multiples state convention. There was a fun contest for twins that included prizes being awarded to the most look-a-likes and the least-look-a-like twins in attendance, along with games, food, prizes and so much fun.

The cover photo contest hosted by TWINS™ Magazine was also a huge success! We want to thank everyone who came out to support this family event to help spread awareness about our 1st Annual National Multiple Birth Awareness month April 2009. Be sure to join us next year in 2010!



**Hurry...The Registration Deadline for NOMOTC's Annual Convention 'Only in Vegas' is June 10th**—Make your plans now to attend the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) 49th Annual Convention July 26-August 1, 2009 at the Flamingo Hotel. This year's convention is being hosted by the Mountain States Mothers of Adult Multiples. All of the organizers' twins are over the age of 18 (the oldest set is age 52!) and they live in Nevada, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, South Dakota, Washington, Missouri and Pennsylvania. With a theme, 'Only in Vegas', these ladies are ready to host a week filled with exciting activities and great fun. Opening ceremonies begin on Wednesday, July 29 and the convention wraps up on Saturday evening with a formal banquet and installation of new officers for the national organization. There are numerous workshop opportunities for members to enjoy that cover many topics. Friday Luncheon keynote speaker is Steven Kalas, a longtime columnist for the *Las Vegas Review Journal* and he is a noted individual, marriage and family counselor. He often performs as a stand-up comic and is a nationally-recognized public speaker. In addition, he writes songs and performs in a band. The planning committee has also arranged some exciting tours including a Neon Lights Tour; Jubilee! All Access Backstage Walking Tour at Bally's Las Vegas and to see the classic Las Vegas show, Jubilee!; Red Rock and Mt.

Charleston Tour; Hoover Dam Tour and Legends in Concert. Hotel room rates for convention are only \$75.00 or \$100.00 for an upgraded 'Go Room.' Registration details and a complete listing of all activities planned for this year's convention can be found at [www.nomotc.org](http://www.nomotc.org).

### Twin Mom is Finalist on 'The Next Food Network Star' Which Premiered in June!

—Ten finalists compete to win their own *Food Network* show and this year twin mom, Melissa D'Arabian (of Keller, Texas) who is a stay-at-home mom with four young daughters [Valentine (4), Charlotte (3), and twins, Margaux & Oceane (1½)] has an amazing home-cook take on family food. Melissa D'Arabian, age 40, is a home cook who pairs her varied culinary and life experiences to provide food lifestyle solutions and approachable recipes for today's families. As a stay-at-home mom to four young daughters, she efficiently budgets time and money to prepare the finest in fresh, home-cooked meals every day. Melissa finds culinary inspiration in family, friends, cooking classes, and world travels. She is married to Philippe, whom she met working for Disney in Paris. She moved to Keller, Texas in

June 2006 with her family. Melissa held a variety of interesting jobs throughout her life including: serving as private chef for a family of seven, singing on Mediterranean cruise ships, working for Disney in Burbank and Paris, business and strategy consulting, and waitressing. She stopped the majority of her work in summer 2007 when she was put on bed rest with the twin pregnancy.

Melissa has been passionate about cooking from a very young age and understands that today's families have diverse backgrounds and needs. These families don't just need recipes, but they need food lifestyle solutions,

and Melissa's experience provides her the opportunity to share great ideas and recipes for any kind of family. She strives to create the right meals for all members of her family and for all phases of life with a family

(from pregnancy to baby/toddler foods to impressing the in-laws to serving a huge family feast). Melissa believes that more than ever, we are seeing thriftiness in moms who may not need to be thrifty, but actually desire to be and enjoy being budget conscious and business-savvy. She makes delicious, family-friendly food on a budget.



~ Continued on Page 54

## A lot o' tots

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# Are You a True Parent

When I was suddenly transformed from a mother of one very independent 5-year-old daughter to a mom with a kindergartner plus twin baby girls, I found that my parenting style relaxed a great deal. If you're like me and catch yourself saying, "Oh well, they can use all the nutrition they can get!" when you see your twin toddlers eating food scraps from last night's dinner off the floor, then this quiz is for you! You may find that you, too, deserve a master's degree in TPM-True Parent of Multiples! Read through each question and circle your answer. When you're finished, see the instructions at the end for calculating your score.

## You know you are a parent of multiples when...

### 1. You cut their fingernails:

- Weekly
- When they scratch a sibling while trying to grab a toy
- Only when they wake up with big red marks on their cheeks

### 2. You cut their toenails:

- Weekly
- Only if they are exposed while you're cutting their fingernails
- When they scratch you during a diaper change (It can happen!)

### 3. You change their diapers:

- Every three hours, or more if necessary
- When your spouse reminds you
- Only when you smell that distinctive odor

### 4. You feed them:

- On a set schedule as the pediatrician advised
- Nutritious food, like peas, the rest of the family won't touch
- Any time they scream because it's the fastest way to quiet them

### 5. You bathe them:

- Daily
- When they are really messy
- Only if the bathtub has been scrubbed, and who has time for that?

### 6. You have time alone with your spouse:

- Every Friday night when the sitter comes
- For a half hour every night between getting the children to sleep and falling asleep yourself
- What exactly is time alone again?

### 7. You're sure your pediatrician is:

- Providing the best possible care for your multiples
- Becoming quite wealthy, thank to you
- Refusing to answer the phone because you have awakened him/her for the umpteenth time in the middle of the night with serious concerns about one of your sick twins, trips, quads or quints

### 8. You have them professionally photographed:

- On an every-four-months schedule, as the photographer suggested
- Only once a year because having all of them fed, clean, rested and smiling by the time you get to the studio leaves you exhausted for the next 12 months
- Never again. You did it once and it was such a nightmare you swore off it for good.

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# of Multiples?

## 9. You go on overnight trips:

- a) Monthly to visit in-laws
- b) Once in a blue moon because you are an eternal optimist and hope each trip will finally be the one that starts them sleeping away from home
- c) Never again. You did it once and it was such a nightmare you swore off it for good

## 10. You hear a child crying or whining and you:

- a) Check it out immediately—someone could be hurt!
- b) Wait five to 20 minutes and see if the noise stops, then check to make sure everyone is okay
- c) Convince yourself that it's the neighbor's kids and cover your head with a pillow

## Calculating Your Score

Give yourself 10 points for every 'C' answer; 5 points for every 'B' answer and 1 point for every 'A' answer.

**100 points:** Congratulations! You are an official TPM and you definitely deserve a break! It's amazing that you even found tie to take this quiz. Give yourself a hand for taking 5 minutes from your busy schedule just for you.

**50-99 points:** You are well on your way to becoming an over-tired, under-appreciated parent of multiples. Either than or your multiples are older and they spend a lot of time playing Wii or at their friend's houses.



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## Father of Five:

### Twins Again?

**The grainy black-and-white ultrasound couldn't have been any clearer. Two small circles, two dark spots, two little flutters.**

*We were having twins... Again.*

Alex and Madeline were four and a half, Katherine was not quite 18 months and there we were, back in the same exam room where it all started, finding out we were having two more.

For a good, solid minute we sat in silence, taking deep breaths and staring at the monitor as if we were in a trance. Finally my wife blurted out: "Oh my God - what kind of a car is going to fit five kids?"

Without cracking a smile our doctor shrugged and deadpanned: "A Suburban."

Most statistics put the average American family at somewhere between 2.06 and 2.10 children – a fact which has come to explain the novelty of having five kids in today's Western culture. From the minute we saw those

two little flutters we knew we'd be branded a social anomaly.

My mother-in-law, for example, burst into hysterical laughter when we told her we were pregnant with numbers four and five. So did my mother. My father literally took an hour to absorb the news, while my father-in-law simply told us to get a bigger house... and soon.

When word got out to the rest of the world, most people gasped and told us how lucky we were (a legitimate reaction given our doctor's claim that the odds of naturally conceiving twins twice is about the same as getting struck by lightning). Others suggested we get our own reality show on TLC.

And of course all of the people who thought we were crazy to have three children had plenty to say about our fourth and fifth. From the generic "How will you afford it?" to the more caustic "better you than me," people didn't mince their words.

Buried within the novelty, though, was the very real feeling that our life

was changing – and for real, this time. The jump from zero children to two was big but expected; and the jump from two to three was nothing. But making the leap up to five was an unequivocal game-changer.

For starters, my father-in-law was right: we needed to move. Our three tiny bedrooms just weren't practical anymore; plus, we wanted a town that offered a myriad of sports and activities so our five kids, who all already have different interests, would have plenty to choose from.

Mostly, though, we just needed to adapt to the everyday nuances that exist outside the American "norm". Most strollers are built for one or two children; we needed one that could hold three. Most restaurants have booths to fit five; we'd always need one for seven. And most deals, specials, coupons and prizes are for a "Family 4-Pack." With us that would barely cover half.

Kevin and Elizabeth were born full-term on a rainy September morning only a minute apart and weighing-in at

a combined 14 pounds, 15 ounces (which I'm fairly certain qualifies my wife for sainthood). Coming from a comparatively small family, I was in awe – amazed, even – the first time I saw all five of my children together.

As early as our hospital stay, though, random strangers felt the need to weigh-in on the size of our brood. One woman chastised us for having so many children, citing the world population and the growing need to adopt. Another said we should have just stopped after the first set of twins. And plenty of uninhibited types had the nerve to ask, “natural or in-vitro?” with the same ease a waitress would ask “regular or decaf?”

Lucky for us, peppered within all the cynicism and commentary was genuine excitement - mostly from people who either came from or had big families like ours. They assured us that what most saw as a novelty was simply just our life.

That got me thinking. With five kids in public school, I will never again complain about paying my property taxes. And with five kids living under my roof, I should be able to stop shoveling snow by the time I'm 40.

With five kids, they will have to learn patience, independence and responsibility (since my wife and I can't do everything for everybody). They will have to learn how to share, how to fight and how to resolve conflicts; and they will have to learn how to tolerate other opinions and adapt to other interests.

And with five children there will be plenty of people to take care of my wife and me when we're old. More importantly, though, there will be plenty of them to take care of each other.

Life with a big family won't always be easy. We've already had (and will surely continue to have) our ups and downs. But at the end of the day my wife and I rest well knowing we wouldn't have it any other way.

Of all the questions we are asked, the most common is always: “How do you handle all those kids?” I wish we had some snazzy, magical answer; but when people ask how we do it the simple truth is: we just do.

And we haven't even needed a Suburban... yet. ♥

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*Jason Jakubowski lives in West Hartford, CT with his wife and five children and is the Director of Corporate, Community & Educational Development at Charter Oak State College.*



**The Jakubowski children: Fraternal twins, Alex & Madeline (6-years-old); Katherine (2-years-old), and Kevin & Elizabeth, fraternal twins (9 months-old).**

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By Christine Hill

## *Making Memories as a Single Parent of Twins*

If someone would have told me a year ago that I would become pregnant with twins and that five and half months into that twin pregnancy my (previously adoring and loving) husband would then have an about face and leave me high and dry—well, who would believe that? Everything I knew to be true about our relationship was in fact false. But here I am. Taking one day at a time, simultaneously experiencing elation as a brand new mom of twins and sorrow over the loss of my marriage.

I've discovered that one of the loneliest things about being a single parent is that all the little 'miracle moments' are often witnessed alone. Despite the circumstances, I love every moment about being a mother; it is by far the most amazing thing that has ever happened to me and I never thought it would. I think about these little people that I am in charge of almost every moment of the day and I dream about them almost every night.

For me, motherhood has been a crash course in learning to live in the moment, to savor each treasured movement, smile, and sound my little ones make. I really listen to their sounds: their breaths in synch with each other as they sleep, the munching sound of their pacifiers, and

as they get older, their cooing and smiling sounds. Who would have thought smiling was also a sound? What I do is commit the sounds to memory the best I can, hoping to access it years into the future when I want to remember these moments, quickly realizing how fast these moments go by and how fast they grow.

But on the other hand, it's been hard to experience all of these memories alone. Even while pregnant and before my twins were born, the yearning and need to want to turn to someone at night to feel the babies kick and roll inside of me or giggle about what a wild ride pregnancy was. And now, wanting so desperately to have a half hour conversation with someone about how Aiden's eyes are just a little bit bigger today, or how Ella is able to hold her head up for eight seconds instead of five. It makes me realize that these special, everyday moments are what bond parents closer together, because they cannot be shared or understood by anyone else.

I've learned to take steps to better preserve these precious memories in hopes that I'll be able to access them in the future and remember them with clarity. Baby books, photo albums, journaling...are even more important for single parents for that reason. Unfortunately, single parenting does not leave much time for such recre-

ations. However, I've discovered even in this short time period that it is often a quick 'pick me up' to look through baby books and journals and remember where the little ones were just a few short months ago. Baby books with prompts help to provide reminders for information to write, however journals are also very helpful to jot down additional tidbits of information.

In keeping up with these 'memory preservers' in some sort of regular fashion, I hope that years down the road when I look back at the entry written on December 9, 2008 and read 'Ella smiled at her brother for the first time. Aiden drank 9 ounces in one setting' in the kind of scrawl that can only represent baby induced exhaustion, I will be brought back to that time and the happy memories will prevail while the sad ones have had time to simmer down into nothing.



*Christine Hill is a speech-language pathologist currently working in Algonquin, Illinois. She is the proud mother of fraternal twins Aiden and Ella. They were born in September 2008.*



## The Initial Winner

It happened not so long ago, on a brisk evening in March. I was surrounded by brains, neatly dressed in button-downs and slacks, the intelligentist of the area, nervously twitching and reviewing. The affirmative made no case, the cross examination went well—wish I had more time in rebuttal—the negative was fierce, but incoherent. What is “mens rea” anyway?

Racing minds think alike. I adjusted my brown wrap dress, my accolade for the evening; at least I looked the part. My mind was racing along with my opponent’s, and yet, I had not even debated one round for the past two hours. I bent over my knees, I bit my lip, tried to smile. It was far worse than if I had been debating in the final three rounds, far worse than if I had been waiting to be knighted a “great debater.”

I would not raise my head, I could not acknowledge that the votes were in, the decision was final. Who would be crowned District Debate Champ, the expert or the rookie? The boy I barely knew ... or the girl I knew so well? The debaters gathered around, half-heartedly feigning excitement for their teammates. I clutched the back of my chair, leaning forward, ready to fall into elation or despair. The awards were being presented, one-by-one, hour-by-hour it seemed. And finally, “the District Debate Champion is... (The orator, the quick-thinker, the rapid-speaker, the

impressive, the undisputed best in her field) Connelly P. Hardaway.” Polite applause ensues, an elated sister smiles.

Sixteen years before that day those same identical twin sisters were nearing their first birthday. One cried for no reason (and still does) while the other danced the night away with her father (and still tries to). We’ve always been inseparable. No one or nothing could fracture our indelible bond. They tried just once. In second grade, the sisters were in different classrooms, separated by an entire width of the interminable hallway. But we prevailed. We always manage to find our way back to each other. It has been trying over the years to grow up and be the same, yet antipodes; so dependent, but still autonomous. Love is not the question. Devotion perhaps? Loyalty? That one brisk evening in March was not the determining factor, or the ultimate confirmation, just a subtle reassurance: we are one.

I never thought we would make it to the district tournament for the debate team. The team was brand new; masterful, but minute. Four members; my sister and I made up half of the team. We represented our school at the tournament: the two of us, such neophytes that wily nerves had no effect on our compositions. We stayed up until midnight editing and rewriting our arguments. The team wished for the best, but expected nothing beyond the first few rounds. It is safe to say I vastly underestimated my rewriting capabilities. (The orator knew from the start).

The lists were posted for the world to see, the world of twenty teens hoping to become the next Lincoln or Douglas. The initials C.H. on the list. The initials were as obstinate as my sister, refusing to leave the paper for the semifinals, or the finals. C.H. So similar to M.H., the other half. One letter away. Two minutes apart. Big sis always knew how to assume her position of superiority. The crier held her tears, pride took its place.

The ride home was calm, the kind of calm that settles after a body goes through all the stages of joy: anxiety, anticipation, potential calamity, elation,

happiness, pride. We discussed the final debate with our coach, dismissing any who doubted our novice abilities. I replayed every second of my sister’s stunning performance, her victory; she smiled graciously and applauded my researching skills. We were a team. “I have something to tell you all.” The words left my coach’s mouth and attacked the soft underbelly of my heart. “There was a mistake.” A mistake? Did someone pin this crown on our heads just to make us into fools? “The judge misread the initials.” What initials? Letters are letters, definite and clear. “When he typed C.H., he was actually looking at M.H.” But it is our faces that are identical, our reasons, and our minds. Our initials are distinct, he had never even seen us; and yet he mixed us up, like everyone does that meets us for the first time. Even the computer knew.

As it turns out, I had won my first three rounds, I was undefeated. M.H., not C.H. My sister had won just one of her rounds. She should not have gone on to the semifinals. I should have been the one to advance. And yet, she did not steal my place, my glory. She merely finished what I had started. The comeback kid—the underdog. I had handed off the baton, but only the elder could pull through so eloquently. On my shoulders, she had sailed through the final rounds. I had never been happier. We could never be separated, my sister and I. ♥

*Mary Scott (and Connelly) graduated from high school in June, both in the top two percent of their class, and after a successful year as (co) editors-in-chief of their high school newspaper. They are headed to the University of Virginia in the fall, where both girls hope to major in English and pursue careers in journalism/creative writing/communications. For the first time in 18 years, they will not share a room, but hope to be on the same floor of their dorm.*



# Raising Twins Through Each Age & Stage



singleton pregnancy, thereby increasing the possibility that nausea and vomiting might be even more troublesome for a woman carrying multiples. In addition, emotional feelings regarding the pregnancy can also contribute to the severity of symptoms, and the stress of a twin pregnancy

Pregnancy-induced nausea and vomiting, known as morning sickness, are often common complaints of women during their first trimester. While symptoms are usually most severe during the morning hours, the nausea and vomiting can occur at any time, and for an unfortunate few, can last all day. Although the specific cause of morning sickness is unknown, it is possible that the hormonal changes in pregnancy are involved. The levels of human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG), which is produced by the placenta, are at their highest during the first trimester when nausea is usually the most severe. In a multiple-birth pregnancy, those levels could be even higher than in a

could also certainly be enough to trigger that sort of a response. For most women, the symptoms subside by the fourth month of pregnancy and rarely require medical attention. However, if nausea interferes with an expectant woman's daily activities, she should consult her health-care provider. An over-the-counter antacid may be suggested. Occasionally, a woman's vomiting can be severe enough to require hospitalization. If a woman is unable to retain any fluids or solids during a 12-hour period, or if she loses 10 pounds or more, she should notify her doctor immediately. ♥

## Additional Tips for a Multiple Birth Pregnancy

- ▶ If it becomes too uncomfortable for you to sleep in your bed, you could try sleeping or relaxing in a reclining chair. You should be able to get comfortable and you will be able to lie back without lying flat on your back. The footstool lever, pushing the chair forward, will also help you get up.
- ▶ Another more comfortable position for resting may be found in a memory foam or latex bed but you may need some help getting up, though!
- ▶ For the aches and pains of pregnancy, try using a heating pad and hot water bottles can also help relieve pain. Hot showers may help you relax as well.
- ▶ To relieve pressure and backache, try kneeling on all fours and slowly rocking back and forth.
- ▶ Since you will probably be very large and somewhat off-balance toward the end of your pregnancy, always wear flat shoes (with rubber soles, if possible, to protect against slipping). Hold onto railings when going up and down stairs, and be careful of carrying heavy things, such as other children, baskets of laundry, or bags of groceries. Try picking things up with your toes rather than bending over.
- ▶ Do not buy an extensive maternity wardrobe in the beginning. You may go through three sizes during your pregnancy. Try borrowing clothes or buying used maternity clothes. Contact your local parents of multiples club to see if they have any maternity clothes for sale.
- ▶ By your last trimester, it may be difficult to get the panels on maternity underwear, pantyhose or pants even halfway up your belly. Try wearing regular bikini underwear, forget the pantyhose (wear socks to keep warm) and wear dresses instead of pants. Try large, bulky sweaters or sweatshirts for outside coverings.
- ▶ Even at your largest, you may be able to wear men's large or extra large sweatshirts and sweatpants. Sweat suits are great for early days home from the hospital with babies—they are comfortable and fit well, no matter how much weight you have gained during your pregnancy. During those early days when day and night seem to blend together, sweat suits will be comfortable to sleep in and still look nice if someone stops by unexpectedly.
- ▶ Have someone take pictures of you in your last trimester. It will be fun to look back at them (wait a few months after your pregnancy ends!) and marvel at the stomach's capacity to stretch.



# Self-Help Suggestions to Alleviate Morning Sickness Symptoms:

- Upon awakening, eat a few crackers or a slice of dry toast without raising your head from the pillow. Continue lying down for 20 minutes before getting up.
- If brushing your teeth causes or aggravates queasiness, postpone that activity until later in the day when your stomach feels more settled. Rinse your mouth in the meantime.
- Avoid foods that you think you cannot keep down, no matter how nutritious and beneficial they are. Substitute any food you think you can retain, whether it's ice cream or ham. One woman reported that the only food that helped settle her stomach was jalapeno peppers, although she didn't ordinarily care for them.
- If you have a heightened sense of smell, the odors of certain foods can trigger nausea. If this is the case, try to avoid the taste or smell of fatty, fried or spicy foods.
- Try eating small amounts of food frequently, even as often as every hour or two.
- Eat before you feel nauseous. If the symptoms are worse at certain times, try a small meal at least 30 minutes before that time. Never skip meals in an attempt to minimize nausea, since an empty stomach usually only makes it worse.
- Consume very hot or very cold foods or drinks. Sometimes either temperature extreme can ease queasiness.
- Minimize your intake of fluids with meals. Instead, drink small amounts of fluids frequently between meals. Over a short period, however, fluids are more important than solids. Many women find plain water nauseating, but adding lemon or lime can make it more tolerable. Almost everyone, no matter how nauseated, can take teaspoons of crushed ice flavored with fruit juice. This is also true for sherbet or Popsicles. Ginger ale and non-diet colas can be helpful since they are high in carbohydrates.
- Herbal teas such as peppermint, alfalfa, cinnamon, raspberry and barley water can be helpful.
- Try elevating the head of your bed. Since the uterus in a multiple pregnancy is larger than with a single baby, it can press up on the stomach and increase whatever queasiness already exists.
- Avoid fatigue and stress, which may increase the likelihood of nausea.



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with twins

infant  
twins

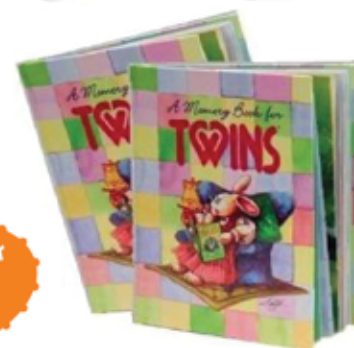
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## Why Your Twins Bite... Each Other

By Adam P. Matheny, Jr.

There is no doubt about the fact that an infant's teeth can be used aggressively, a fact that is justifiably unsettling to the parents of the 'biters' and the parents of the 'bitten.' The relationship between having teeth and using teeth to bite others should not imply that the infant is aggressive, however. Nor does it mean that an infant who bites will be more likely to bite at later ages.

In fact, it is natural for a teething infant to sometimes bite others. Gnawing or chewing on objects is part of the teething process, and an infant cannot easily discriminate between another person's ear, cheek or finger and a teething ring, toy or other inanimate object. Moreover, some infants like to have their gums firmly pressed on or vigorously rubbed to relieve pressure caused by teething. It is therefore difficult for an infant to learn that the finger or knuckle offered for chewing is not to be used some other time for

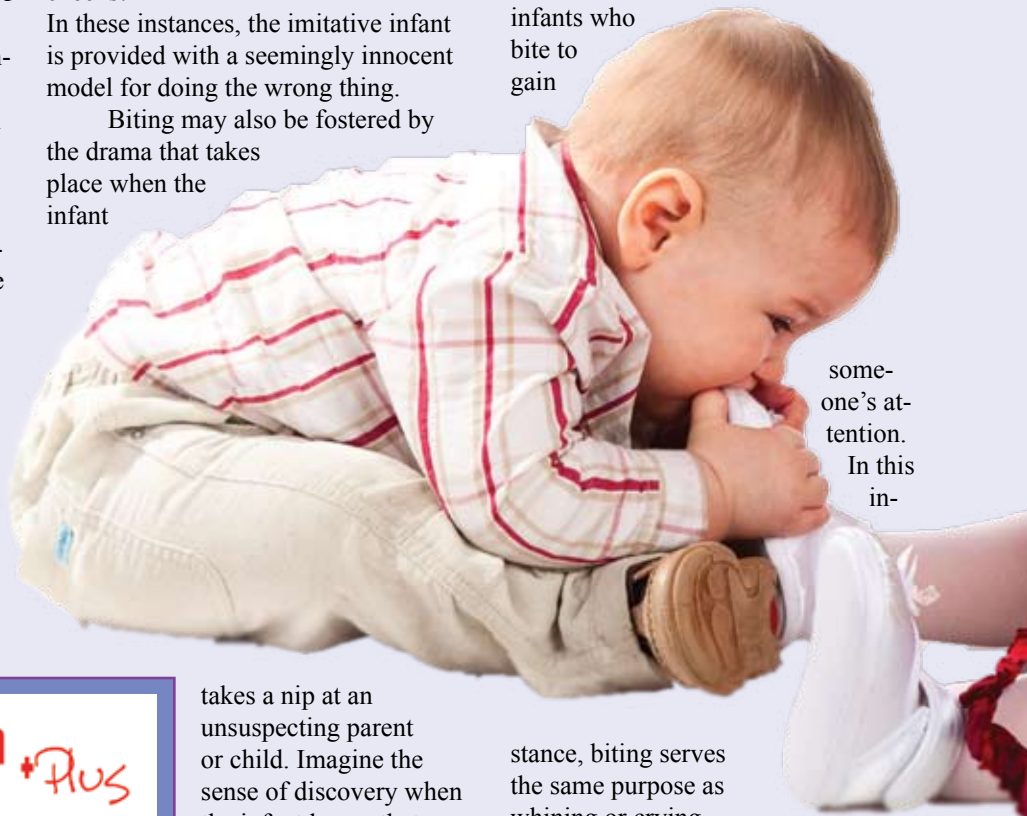
biting. Some infants pick up their biting habit from their parents, who may take little pretend, fun-loving "nibbles" from their infants' fingers, toes, ears or cheeks!

In these instances, the imitative infant is provided with a seemingly innocent model for doing the wrong thing.

Biting may also be fostered by the drama that takes place when the infant

modest path to creative discoveries. But again, the infant is a poor discriminator between objects and flesh as creative media.

There may be infants who bite to gain



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takes a nip at an unsuspecting parent or child. Imagine the sense of discovery when the infant learns that by biting someone, he has gained power and control. When co-twins start to bite each other, for example, there is a commotion often more dramatic than knocking toys or creating the usual chaos. Even if the consequences are unpleasant, the potential message to the infant is that he can 'make the world move' by biting.

Some infants also learn to use their teeth as tools—to take things apart and to change the shape of objects. When the infant takes a bite from a piece of cracker, he has embarked on a

stance, biting serves the same purpose as whining or crying, except that biting is a more powerful attention getter. While this negativistic manner of gaining others' attention is more typical of older children, we cannot rule out the possibility that some infants learn that if they bite, others pay attention.

Finally, it is possible that some infants are just more likely to bite. Since, statistically, male children are more likely to be biters, perhaps the biting behavior is just one aspect of the prevailing picture, one in which more aggressive patterns of activities are noted for boys.

Dr. Judith Garrard of the University of Minnesota recently reported that male children in a daycare center were also more likely to be bitten. One suspects that more boys engage in bouts of biting each other than girls, verified by some of the University of Louisville Twin Study mothers' re-

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ports that it is the boy twin pairs who engage in these alarming encounters. Studies of infants have not established a connection between biting during infancy and biting at later ages. As a consequence, it is not known if boy toddlers or preschoolers were

infants prone to bite or, for that matter, were infants who teethed early.

Nevertheless, if the infant bites, his parents should try not to overreact. There is nothing to be gained from biting the infant "to show that it hurts." Shouting or spanking are not effective, either, in controlling or preventing the problem. Any of these reactions potentially teaches the infant how he can control attention and events by biting someone, no matter how unpleasant the consequences of that behavior. A perceptive infant may even learn that even an infant can produce pain in others. The best solution, if the infant looks like he is going to bite, is simply to move the opportunity away. If co-twins start to bite each other, they should be separated and diverted with another activity. Should the twins start the habit of frequent biting, temporary separation to different areas of the house may be called for so that the copy cat biting pattern is prevented. By all means, try not to leave the twins alone with each other for extended periods.

Modeling appropriate ways to interact with people (without biting!) provides the right example of babies to imitate. Be specific in praising the infant(s) who is refraining from biting as well. ♥

## WHEN DO TEETH EMERGE?

The eruption of an infant's first tooth and the growth of teeth thereafter seem to follow a pattern dictated by that infant's physical endowments. The plan may be guided by genetic heritage, as evidenced by the similarity of teething patterns of identical twins. With a clear understanding of individual teething patterns, there is a universal 'plan' for teething. The usual order of eruption begins with lower central incisors, which usually appear between 5 and 10 months of age for 67 percent of infants. The upper central incisors are likely to emerge next, at about 9 to 10 months of age, and are followed by the upper and lower lateral incisors at about one year of age. Because an infant obtains a complement of 20 teeth by three years of age, it is easy to see why teething, especially if it is a difficult process, is a preoccupation of many parents.

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Twins Brayden & Makenzie love to hike!

By Melinda Rhodes

**S**ummertime and the livin' is easy. Ha! Let's face it: at times nothing seems easy with twin toddlers in tow. It may seem like a daunting task to take your dynamic duo hiking, but it doesn't have to be. With a little planning and preparation it can be a fun activity for the whole family and a great way to introduce children to nature.

If you're not sure how much your twins can handle yet, just let them set the pace. You may be surprised by how fast and how far their little legs will carry them. Whenever my almost 2-year-old son's feet hit the dirt he yells, "Let's go, go, gooo!" and takes off at the speed of light. Once they have mastered walking, most toddlers can handle hiking short distances—about a half mile or so—on relatively even terrain. They will love traversing small rises and falls but can't yet handle steep climbs. For longer hikes, you will need to invest in child carriers for your twins.

## Choose the Right Pack

Prices of child carriers range from \$80 upwards to about \$300. If you are only planning on going one or two short hikes, you can most likely get by with the less expensive models. If you plan on going on hikes longer than about two miles, however, I would recommend purchasing a higher-end pack made by Deuter or Kelty. True, this is a lot of money (especially times two!), but purchasing the right carrier is critical, particularly when hiking with twins. If you don't select one that is ergonomically

designed to fit both parents and children, your back will ache and, unlike parents of singletons, you usually don't have the option of handing your precious cargo off to someone else. My husband and I learned this the hard way. We used three different brands before finding one that was truly comfortable for all of us. It's a good idea to take your twins to a sporting goods store with you to try out the packs before you hit the trail. Some of the features that we found to be worth paying a little extra for were:

- Adjustable torso length
- Padded hip belt
- Breathable child seat
- Storage for hydration reservoir
- Side pockets for sippy cups
- Sun/rain hood (sold as an accessory on most models)
- Child-view mirror (also sold as an accessory on most models)

## Plan Flexible Trips

There are many resources to help you plan a twin-friendly hiking trip. The National Park website, nps.gov, breaks hikes down into three categories—easy, moderate and difficult—making it a snap to pick an age-appropriate hike. Many trails have optional side spurs that can extend your hike if your twins are agreeable. Trails

# Have you ever thought of taking your dynamic duo hiking?

com, a pay subscription service, allows you to search for hikes in your area based on key words such as "child-friendly." If you prefer a guide book, Mountaineers Books publishes *Hiking with Children* series for a number of different states and Falcon Books also has a line called *Best Easy Day Hikes*. Once you choose your route, it's easy to get caught up in the destination. But with twin toddlers you need to remain flexible. Remember to slow down and see the world through their eyes. They are just as interested—if not more—in the blossoms and branches and bugs (oh, my!) along the way as they are in what lies at the end of the trail. Let them out of their packs every so often to stretch their legs and explore their surroundings.

## Pack Extra Gear

As a seasoned parent of multiples you already pack extra diapers and approximately 816 diaper wipes for any outing. But don't forget to bring an old towel or changing pad as I have yet to encounter a Koala Care station in the woods. You will also need some Ziploc bags to pack the dirty diapers out in. Plenty of snacks and water are also a must. Even if you think it will just be a short hike, be sure to pack lunch as well. With twin toddlers, you never know how long they will stop along the way to play and explore. You should also bring a change of clothes



Twins Brayden & Makenzie Rhodes hiking with dad

for those “monkey-see-monkey-do” moments like jumping in a mud puddle or smearing jelly all over their pants. Even in the summer you should pack jackets because mountain weather can change unexpectedly. Other hiking essentials include a compass, first aid kit, mosquito repellent, and sunscreen. It goes without saying that you need to apply sunscreen to every inch of your kids’ bare skin. But even if they are wearing pants you should apply some to their legs. Pants tend to ride up when they are in the child carrier, exposing previously covered skin.

## Keep it Fun

The most important thing to remember when hiking with your twins is to keep it fun! Point out all of the cool, colorful and creepy-crawly things along the way. Make up a silly song about your journey or even jump off logs and rocks with them. The memories you make will last a lifetime. We have been hiking with our twins Brayden and Makenzie since they were 9-months old and now they are almost two. We really enjoy this quality time we spend with them and as a family. ♡



*Top Photo: “Let’s Go, Go, Goo” Makenzie!  
Bottom Photo: Melinda Rhodes hiking with her twin daughter Makenzie.*



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**Their voices cut through the quiet afternoon: “Mommy please can’t we go out now?...Puhleeze, Mommy, I really, really need to stay inside and watch TV... Daddy, Daddy, he hit me for nothing! Aren’t you going to do something, Daddy?”**

Whatever the subject, whining puts that ugly, nasal edge in children’s voices and adds sour facial expressions that say, “I’m cranky, and I’m gonna be sure you know about it!” As most parents know, a whine is a nagging demand that leaves little room for a reasonable parental response. It may be focused on a particular situation, or be just a general string of complaints. And a whining session seems to go on and on. It’s not really bad behavior, but it can drive even the calmest parents to distraction! The most likely reason your delightfully verbal little ones have adopted this unpleasant style of getting their parent’s attention is that it works. Few parents can



ignore a whining child for very long. Most either give in to the demand or eventually lose their temper. By whining, children engage their parents; and, as the experts keep telling us, children believe that any kind of attention is better than being ignored.

Sometimes stressful situations—even a birthday party or a family gathering with too much stimulation—will trigger whining. It’s not quite crying or screaming, but it expresses the same state of emotional overload. Overtired children aren’t mature enough to figure out what’s wrong, and they don’t know how to express why they’re feeling miserable. Whining about absolutely nothing may represent their best attempt at asking for help. One of the most common whining patterns begins with “why”—for example, the child’s asking “Why do I have to go to bed?” Of course, this “why” is not about being curious; it’s a delaying tactic. Children

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## Strategies to Try

1. Quickly consider the facts behind the whining. Is this a genuine distress call? Maybe the message is one that deserves a response, even if the way your child is behaving is hard to take. Try showing your child how to ask more appropriately, and then respond with help or solutions.
2. Come up with a rational compromise. For example, insist that the children go out with you, but set your DVR to record that favorite TV show they're whining about missing. This isn't giving in or giving up. It shows your multiples that problems are solvable and makes both parent and children feel good.
3. Be a good model for your children. When you're cranky, have a complaint, or just need attention, be direct and try not to whine. Ask for what you want only once and wait a reasonable time for a response.
4. Try using a humorous response to prevent future whines. When you keep hearing your twins say, "But I really want to have this!" Try responding with humor, "Yes, I know, I really want to have world peace but sometimes we can't get what we want at the moment we want to get it!" If you always respond with this reply, they won't even bother asking for things they 'want' when you're out with them because they know what your response will be.

## Moves to Avoid

1. Don't give in. It's tempting, but the price of peace is too high. You'll be encouraging a whining communication style that you may have to live with for years and years.
2. Don't lose your temper or criticize. Whining can be maddening, and we do want our children to know that the impression they're making is negative. But preschoolers will not learn how to speak nicely if we make remarks like, "Don't use that tone of voice with me, young lady!"
3. Avoid active or reflective listening. These are communication tools that are usually very helpful; reflecting back your child's words builds connections by letting her know you care enough to listen until you get the message. But when she's whining, the message isn't in her words—it's in her voice tone and manner. If you get caught up in reflecting her words, try responding to her feelings instead.

### A sample dialogue might be:

Child: Ooooh, I want that candy bar, I want it sooo much, Mommy! Why can't I have it now, puh-leeze, let me have it now...

Parent: You're really unhappy, and you want something' but I don't think its candy. Come sit with me for a minute and let's try to figure it out.

learn that answering questions takes time, and delays the inevitable bedtime, or whatever. Parents will know when their children are into the "why whine" when they offer reasons and their children respond with, "But why...?" Some children simply tend toward exaggeration and dramatizing their feelings, by saying things like, "But I'm sooooo tired!" or "I'm sooooo bored!" The children may not even be consciously trying to elicit their parents' sympathy and concern; it's just the way they express themselves when they're upset.

## The Twin Factor

Since twins often try to define some separateness for themselves by going to opposite extremes, they may get into patterns where one is the whiner and one the cheerful, cooperative child. In other words, each may "specialize" in a particular mode of getting adult attention. This differentiating trait may be illustrated by significant temperamental differences in style or voice quality. One twin's whining and complaining may be a lot easier to listen to than the other. So it may be easy to label the twin with the more "difficult" voice as the whiner.

Is there a good solution? Of course it's always useful to make sure multiples know that each is unique in positive ways and that you see special qualities in each of them. If you find yourself thinking of one as a whiner and one as easier to deal with, try to identify exceptions—situations where this stereotype doesn't apply. Go ahead and call attention to the times when your usually cranky whiner is asking for something appropriately. Say, "I really like how you did that! You kept your voice calm, so it was easy for me to hear you!" Both children will get the message. ♥

The advertisement features a blue and gold patterned background. At the top, two circular images are shown: one of a woman holding a baby in a feeding pillow, and another of a woman wearing a twin sling. Text boxes above the images identify the products as "EZ-2-NURSE TWINS Feeding Pillow for 2" and "DOUBLE TAKE! Twin Sling™". A starburst graphic next to the sling image says "NEW PRODUCT!". Below the images, a large text box states "OVER 100 TWIN-SPECIFIC PRODUCTS AVAILABLE". At the bottom, the brand name "Double Blessings" is written in a large, pink, cursive font, with the tagline "designing heavenly comfort for your little angels" underneath. The website "www.DoubleBlessings.com" and phone number "1-800-584-TWIN" are listed at the bottom.



**There's no doubt that tweens and teenagers have chosen text messaging as their communication medium of choice. However, in exchange for the obvious convenience factor, there are numerous pitfalls from "sexting," where teens send explicit photos of themselves to boyfriends, girlfriends, friends or even casual acquaintances, to the common concern that**

**children are texting while crossing the street or driving.**

With this in mind, Shane Neman, CEO of EZ Texting ([www.eztexting.com](http://www.eztexting.com)) offers these five tips on the dangers of text messaging:

### 1) Never text & drive.

While this may seem obvious, many people ignore their common sense and do it anyway, especially teenagers. Many states have banned talking on mobile phones without a hands free device while driving. They have the right idea, never text and drive. Don't let the cost of a few headsets stand in the way of your child's safety. If you have to, suspend driving privileges.

### 2) Sexting.

Another 'seemingly obvious' rule. Talk to your kids about the practice, and about peer pressure. A survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy found that more than 50 percent of the girls who "sexted" did so under pressure from boyfriends. If either party involved is under 18, the pictures may be considered child pornography. Make it clear

to your child that 'sexting' is not a way of being intimate with another person, and that there are other, more private, more appropriate, alternatives.

### 3) Text and walk.

This one's for parents & kids: Always keep your eyes ahead of you, not on your phone. This is especially true when walking on a busy sidewalk or crossing an intersection. When using your cell phone, it's very easy to get distracted and lose focus on what is taking place around you. A study by the University of Alabama found that children speaking on a cell were 43 percent more likely to be hit or to have a close call in simulated street crossings than kids who weren't on the phone.

### 4) Think before you text.

It only takes seconds of poor judgment for a private thought to hit the airwaves. Once you send a text message, even to a friend, you can't take it back and you never know who might see it. Prevent embarrassing moments by thinking twice before you text - just as you would before you speak.

### 5) Avoid paying additional fees.

Avoid paying additional fees. Call your carrier to block third-party applications on your child's handset. Think of it as a V-Chip for the phone.

Explain to your children - ringtones, games, apps - they all cost money and can contain explicit content. As children are granted cell phone privileges at such young ages, not all have a true understanding of money and the value of a dollar. If an explanation doesn't cut it, take control and limit the programs and features your child can and cannot access with their phone. ♥





## Monitor your Twins' Cell Phone Use

If you're like most parents of children who have cellular phones, you are probably wondering exactly how that phone is being used when you're not there to supervise in person. Who is your child calling? How frequently? Who is calling your child? With whom are text messages being shared? Is your child safe?

There is a way to keep a much closer eye on your child's cell phone activities. This comes by way of parental cell phone monitoring software, such as RADAR.

RADAR is a cell phone monitoring software for parents – not a spyware – that allows the cell phone to communicate with you, the parent, on an enhanced level through supervision and alerts. This software was developed in response to the need to combat the risk of cell phone misuse by children – especially with Internet enabled cellular phones – and to deter cyber bullying and to deal with it if it happens. Essentially, it is software developed to help parents keep their children safe.

Modern cell phones are equipped with a large number of different features, such as the basic telephone feature, interactive games, web surfing, text and e-mail messages, and even picture and video sharing. This makes it very important for parents who have children with such high-tech phones to be able to remain aware of what their children are seeing on their phones, with whom they are communicating, and what is being shared about them.

Naturally, talking to your children about such risks remains very important, but cell phone monitoring software allows you to compliment your child's awareness with additional security.

Programs such as RADAR function by allowing you, the parent, to see exactly what your child is seeing on the Internet, and to hear what your children are hearing when they use their cellular phones. It also provides you with the ability to find out who your child is talking to, and who is sending and receiving text messages to and from your child. You receive immediate notification as soon as any of the following occurs:

- There is a change to the address book on your child's phone
- Calls are sent or received to a number you have not pre-authorized
- Emails are sent or received from addresses that you have not pre-authorized
- Text messages are sent or received from numbers you have not pre-authorized
- Instant messages are received from contacts you have not pre-authorized.

These alerts will come to you in your choice of e-mail alert or SMS text message. The text of any of the above events is stored for your review, including the phone call start and end time. You will be provided with a website where you can maintain your child's account and monitor exactly what is happening on your child's cellular phone.

*\*Courtesy of Articlesbase.com*

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# Traveling with Twins Without Breaking the Bank

By Barb Nefer, Ph.D.

they were stuck in a storefront. An experienced agent will know the tips and tricks that lead to the best deals.

## Flying with the Family

Over the past few years, airlines have made it progressively more difficult to fly with larger families. Some have limited pre-boarding for kids or eliminated it altogether. Many charge extra for seat assignments, and Southwest Airlines doesn't

give any assignments at all. This makes it a challenge for families with multiple children to sit together, or even nearby. The vast majority of carriers are also charging for checked luggage, so when you've got a big brood of twins and singletons, the baggage fees can rival the ticket price.

If you are flying and some or all of your children are too young to sit alone, do everything possible to get assigned seats, even if it means paying extra. Once you get those assignments, check them periodically as your vacation date approaches. Airlines are notorious for changing seating arrangements, often without any notification. If there is a

Vacations put a drain on any family's budget, but when you've got twins the expenses are multiplied. You've got at least two children, but your brood might well include more. Even if there's only one additional sibling, you've got a party of five when you toss the parents in the mix. Suddenly your family is too large to fit into many hotel rooms, since they often have a capacity of four. You may face a struggle getting airline seats together, not to mention the per-bag luggage fee charged by many carriers. Once you get to your vacation destination, you may be overwhelmed as the expenses rack up far beyond your budget. Fortunately there are some ways to travel with your twins and the rest of the troop without having to take out a second mortgage.

## Affordable Accommodations

Many hotels are geared for the stereotypical family with Mom, Dad, and two children. Families with multiples often exceed that number, which means they're forced to get two rooms, effectively being forced to pay double. Fortunately, a growing number of hotels and resorts are starting to recognize that larger families are a huge business opportunity. For example, the Disney World Resort in Orlando recently added family suites to its All-Star Music Resort. The standard rooms only hold four people, but the family suites hold six plus a crib baby under age three. There is also a kitchenette so you can maximize your savings by eating some

meals in your room. Plenty of other hotels in Orlando and virtually every other major vacation destination in the United States are starting to cater to the family crowd with larger rooms. Some are even converting into all-suites properties. Start with these suite hotels when planning your next trip.

Vacation homes are another option for larger families. They can be rented by the day or week, and the price often works out to be much cheaper than a hotel. You get a whole house to yourselves, which often includes a pool, games, themed bedrooms, and other amenities. You can always comparison shop on websites like Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO) and similar sites like these.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, contact a travel agent who specializes in family travel to help you find the best accommodation bargains. The Internet allows travel agents to draw clients from around the country, so they are able to specialize in niches that wouldn't be practical if





problem, you need to catch it and get it resolved before you get to the airport.

If you fly Southwest Airlines, do your online check-in exactly 24 hours before your flight. The boarding order is assigned based on check-in order, with fliers assigned to an A, B, or C group. While Southwest still allows passengers to pre-board with children under four, the 'A' group is allowed to board first. It's better to check in early and get 'A' boarding passes, even if you have young children. That will allow you to get your seats before the family pre-boarders. For your return trip, many hotels will do the online check-in and print your boarding passes upon request.

Even with the best planning, you may end up having to split up your family. Prepare the children beforehand, and reassure the younger ones that they will at least be with Mom or Dad. Give them a sense of control by letting them decide on how they will divide up if it becomes necessary. Agreeing on this beforehand can ward off whining at the airport.

Large families mean a large amount of luggage, which can rack up a hefty extra bill. Most airlines charge an average of \$15 for the first checked bag and even more for additional bags. If you must fly on an airline that imposes these fees, pare down your packing to the necessities. If you're going on a long trip and staying at a hotel with laundry facilities, you can save money by washing a few loads of clothes. It might not be fun to do household chores on vacation, but if your budget is tight it may be worth your time.

If possible, fly an airline like Southwest that still allows free checked luggage. Southwest allows two free bags per person, including the children, and JetBlue and Alaska Air both allow one free bag per person.

### All-Inclusive Offers

When you've got a large family, it can be hard to plan your expenses. When you get to your vacation destination, the kids may start clamoring for extras. You can prevent this and make sure you stay on budget by choosing an all-inclusive trip. Resorts like Beaches and Club Med provide accommodations, meals, and special programs and activities for kids from toddler age up to the teens, all at one set price. Dude ranches are another popular pay-one-price option, especially if you have budding horse lovers and cowboys in the family. Resorts and dude ranches also help you solve the dilemma of differing interests. One of your twins might be a daredevil, while the other has tamer tastes. Or maybe some of the sibs like adventure, while others want to do more laid-back activities. Beach resorts offer everything from floating sedately in an inner tube to open-sea snorkeling and kayaking. Dude ranch activities run the gamut from trail rides to hikes to whitewater rafting.

There's no avoiding the fact that vacations are expensive, and more kids mean a higher cost. Fortunately, a little planning and care can take away some of that financial pressure so you can concentrate on having a good time and making precious memories. That's what family vacations are really all about. ♥

*Barb Nefer is a counselor/life coach in Celebration, Florida. She offers services online and in person to couples and families. She is married to a twin and is an active freelance writer who*



*enjoys writing about self-help and parenting topics.*

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# Super Summer Survival Guide



## Eating Out!

### Easy treats for summer picnic fun

By Charlene Patton

Food, fun and families just seem to go with picnics. Picnics, whether planned or spur-of-the-moment, provide great opportunities for families to spend treasured time together—especially in summer. Picnics may be in the park, at the beach, at a soccer or baseball game, at a local fruit orchard or even in your very own backyard. The food can be a simple sandwich or an elaborate picnic hamper. Whatever the menu, families always seem to enjoy the occasion. There's just something fun about dining outside with your kids.



## Planning Your Picnic

The success of your picnic depends on planning. Do as much advance preparation as possible. Sometimes just the thought of planning food, supplies and all the details makes us tired before we even begin. The picnic box is a perfect way to always be ready for a neighborhood block party, community potluck or other meal activity away from home. After returning home, restock the box so it will always be ready. A picnic box may be a basket, a decorated carton, a plastic tote or tub or any handy container. Simplify your menu to allow as much flexibility as possible for outdoor family activities. Playing games, enjoying playground equipment, fishing, taking nature walks or exploring are fun ways to enjoy the outdoors. Preparing menus with finger foods will eliminate extra utensils. Your multiples won't need to balance cups, plates and spoons. Finger foods can be eaten on the run or while the family sits on a blanket.

## Picnic Prep

Remember to keep foods at the proper temperature. When the weather gets hot, additional safety precautions should be taken to keep food safe. Any food or beverage that is to be served cold should be chilled before it's packed. Use plenty of ice or frozen packages or coolant to keep ice chests cold. Ice lasts longer and packs easier if empty milk or 2 liter bottles are used to freeze blocks of ice. Ice cubes for beverages may be kept separate in resealable plastic bags. Keep food chilled as long as possible. Remove food from the cooler only when you're ready to serve.

For easy transporting you can pack picnic foods in several small baskets rather than in one large container. Once you get to your picnic location, let your multiples choose the exact spot. They'll be excited to help carry baskets of goodies to their special place. Picnics should be a family event from planning and preparing to even helping with clean up afterwards. It's a special activity that will provide many opportunities to celebrate summer!

## A Special Sandwich

Pita pockets are perfect picnic sandwiches. The unique round bread is hollow on the inside. You can cut the pita bread in half to make two pockets, which keep the sandwich together making it easy for your twins to hold. Spread the pita bread with a favorite condiment and fill it with veggies, meat and cheese. Four extra ease in the park, you can stuff the pitas with meat and cheese at home. Then

add condiments and veggies just before serving. Wrap



each sandwich tightly and keep them cold until it's time to eat. To personalize the sandwiches, fill the pitas with your multiples' favorite ingredients and label with their names.

## Fresh Fruit and Veggies

A basketful of fresh fruit is a simple and colorful addition to your picnic menu. Let your family select apples, peaches, oranges, grapes, bananas, melons or whatever season fruit is available. Fresh veggies are just right for outdoor eating. Raw vegetables make wonderful finger salads. Choose from zucchini, tomatoes, green and sweet red peppers, cauliflower and broccoli. Be sure to wash the veggies before cutting them into spears, flowerets or rounds. Pack into a container with water and ice to help keep them crisp.



## Sweets for Your Sweets!



Dessert is a special treat. For summer picnics, try to avoid chocolate chips in your recipes—the hot sun will melt them and make a mess of your multiples. Cakes and bar cookies are your best bet. They're easily transported in baking pans. The double-layer cupcakes (see recipe) are a perfect addition to a picnic. Because the frosting is in the middle, these cupcakes are practically mess-free, easy to transport and fun to eat. Plus, they're so easy to make...just grab a spoon and mixing bowl, and let your little bakers do the stirring. In just a few minutes you'll have luscious double-layer cupcakes.

### Super Twin Double-Layer Cupcakes

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg

Combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda and salt in mixing bowl. Stir in buttermilk, vegetable oil and vanilla. Add egg and blend thoroughly. Pour ¼ cup batter into cupcake liners. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes in a 350 degree oven. Cool completely before frosting with creamy butter frosting (see recipe). Slice each cupcake in half horizontally. Spread frosting on bottom half and cover with top of cupcake. Makes 12 cupcakes.

### Creamy Butter Frosting

- 1 ¼ cup softened butter
  - 1 ½ cups sifted confectioner's sugar
  - ½ teaspoon vanilla
  - 1 tablespoon milk
- Blend all ingredients until frosting is creamy ♡



### Busy-Day Picnic—

If family members are involved in several activities at different times, consider packing meals in individual boxes, baskets or containers complete with napkins and utensils.

### Spur-of-the-Moment Picnic—

Be ready for that spur-of-the-moment picnic. Keep sandwiches frozen in the freezer! Do not freeze mayonnaise, sour cream, hard cooked eggs, jelly, lettuce or tomato. Add these items just before



### Instant Picnic—

Stop at the store on the way to the picnic. Purchase cheese, fruit, rolls, deli meats, salads and beverages for that last minute picnic.

Grab your "Picnic Box" and you're ready to go!



**Picnic With a Buddy—**Two friends and two lunch boxes make a great summer treat! It doesn't matter whether it's an outdoor tea party under a big shade tree with cookies and lemonade or sandwiches enjoyed under a blanket hanging from a clothes line. These are wonderful backyard picnics your twins can enjoy together!

## 6 Ways for Multiples to Double Their Fun in the Sun:

1. Go on a scavenger hunt
2. Pack a picnic and eat under a tree or on the beach
3. Pick a colorful bouquet of wildflowers to arrange as a table centerpiece
4. Collect a variety of sea shells or pine cones and use them in a craft project
5. Build a towering castle
6. Skip stones across the lake or waves at the beach

Can you identify which of these are potential choking hazards? Balloons, Whole Grapes, Popcorn, Hard candy, Nuts, Sunflower seeds, Watermelon with seeds, Cherries with pits, Raw carrot, Raw peas, Raw celery, Hot dogs, Spoonfuls of peanut butter, Apple chunks, Chunks of meat.

All are choking hazards for young children. In fact, any child under 4 can choke on almost any food or small object, if he does not sit up, chew well or if he squirms and runs around, but the foods on our list are always dangerous. Children under 8 can suck a balloon that has popped down their windpipes.



# More Super Summer Survival

## Cool Shades

You're never too young for some cool shades, according to a University of Alabama at Birmingham optometrist. By protecting eyes with sunglasses and brimmed hats, we can block much of the sun's damaging UV rays. But how young should parents start with their children? "As young as you can keep them on 'em," Leo Semmes, O.D., said. "I have friends who send me pictures of their infants wearing sunglasses and hats." Damaging effects to the eyes from exposure to sunlight is cumulative, he explained, and most of us have reached up to 50 percent of exposure by the time we are age 18.



## SUMMER SAFETY

### Keep Them Safe in the Sun:

- It's safe for babies over the age of 6 months and children benefiting from the vitamin D in sunshine, but too much of a good thing can be harmful.
- Dress babies under the age of 6 months in long pants, long-sleeved shirts and a hat with a brim and keep them in the shade.
- For older babies and children choose a broad-spectrum, waterproof PABA-free sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 made for children. Apply it 30 minutes before exposure to the sun; reapply every two hours and after swimming.
- Select clothes made of tightly woven cotton, which protect better than clothes with a loose weave.
- If your children get sunburns that blister call your doctor immediately.

## Hygiene Tips for Swimming Pools:

- Do not enter the water if you have diarrhea. (People can spread germs in the water even without having an 'accident')
- Do not swallow the water! (Chlorine does not kill all germs.)
- Take your child often to the toilet for bathroom breaks
- Change diapers in a bathroom, not near the pool or shore. Wash babies' bottoms and your hands thoroughly
- Be sure to wash your twins (especially their bottoms) with soap and water before swimming. (Everyone has invisible amounts of fecal matter on his or her bottom that ends up in the water.)
- Do not count on swim diapers or pants to keep fecal matter from leaking into the water. (These products are not leak proof!)
- Do not allow your twins to chew gum or eat while swimming or playing in the water. (Chewing or eating while swimming can cause choking.)

*Source: National Center for Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## The AAP Advice on Swim Lessons...

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to wait until their children are 4-years-old to enroll them in swimming lessons. Lessons for younger children will not "drown proof" them

and may create a false sense of security. Also, there is a possibility that they will swallow so much water that they develop a serious condition known as water intoxication. If you do enroll children younger than 4 in a swimming program, particularly a "Mommy- (or Daddy)-and-Me" class, you should think of it primarily as an opportunity to enjoy playing in the water together. The class you choose should follow national YMCA guidelines, which insist on parent participation and forbid the total submersion of young children's heads or faces. All children age 4 and older should learn to swim. When you enroll children in swim lessons, find an experienced and qualified instructor. Even children in a shallow wading pool and those who know how to swim need to be watched constantly. Empty and store inflatable pools after every use. If you have a backyard swimming pool, enclose it with high fences and locked gates on all four sides.



## When You Head Out This Summer Don't Forget to Bring:

- Sunscreen
- Bug repellent
- Sun Hats & Sun Glasses
- Life jackets
- Swimsuits
- Beach towels
- Play buckets & shovels
- Inflatable rafts
- Beach ball



## Play it Safe on the Playground:

Every day more than 500 playground injuries require visits to hospital emergency rooms. The Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Program for Playground Safety have some suggestions for making sure the play area you choose for your multiples is a safe one. This is also valuable information for assessing the recreation area at your twins' preschool or day care facility.

- All equipment must be age-appropriate
- Areas for preschool and school-age children must be separate
- To prevent little heads from becoming trapped, ladder rungs and other openings should be at least 9 inches wide
- Guardrails should be 29 inches high on preschool equipment and 38 inches high on equipment for school-age children
- Swing seats should be of soft material, not metal or wood
- Inspect the area very carefully. Equipment with missing bolts, broken steps, and sharp edges, splintered wood or rusted parts is off limits. Make sure there is no broken glass or other potentially hazardous material lying around.



## Tips When Traveling With Twins

- ◆ Plan driving trips with your twins for nap time and sightseeing for when they are awake. This way, your multiples will be wide awake—and in a good mood—for sightseeing.
- ◆ Bring or borrow from the hotel a large sheet to put on the floor for rolling, crawling and unwinding. A large sheet is invaluable for keeping the babies occupied, calm and able to move around during travel delays.
- ◆ If you have a nighttime routine, such as singing or story time, continue to follow it while on vacation. This will provide the familiarity and comfort they're used to.
- ◆ Bring familiar toys on the trip but keep some in the suitcase. Then, halfway through, rotate the toys that are “out” with those in the suitcase, so the babies don't get bored with the same toys day after day.
- ◆ When flying, always bring toddler backpacks filled with enough non-messy snacks, toys and activities to hold them over in case of an unanticipated delay.
- ◆ Be sure to book non-stop flights. A direct flight means you make a stop, without a change of planes. Changing planes invites trouble—packing and unpacking diaper bags, getting children settled in new seats and longer flights. It's also better if you book the least popular travel times and routes.

diaper bags, getting children settled in new seats and longer flights. It's also better if you book the least popular travel times and routes.

- ◆ Book your flight in the middle of your children's naptime. Avoid flights in which boarding or arrival coincide with naptime, if possible.
- ◆ When traveling by car, be sure to bring their favorite music and DVDs. If your car does not have a built-in DVD player, having a portable DVD player on long road trips can be a life saver! Hand held gaming devices also work well.
- ◆ For keeping younger travelers entertained bring along paper dolls, pipe cleaners, coloring books & crayons, paint with water books, stickers, vinyl stick-on books, game books and magnet play sets.
- ◆ Keep little fingers busy! Try a puppet show from the front seat. “This Little Piggy” will gobble up the miles. Drawing eyes on a closed fist held sideways turns a hand into a puppet. Wiggle the thumb to make it “talk”. A pillow serves as a dandy finger-puppet theater.
- ◆ Go to your local dollar store and buy some birthday party favor bags. Fill each party bag with either a small toy from the dollar store OR use old happy meal toys they have not seen in a long time. Every so many miles traveled let them choose a ‘surprise’ goodie bag and see how long they will keep busy! You can also fill some of the bags with goldfish, teddy grahams, gummy bears and a juice box, too!
- ◆ For older kids, give them clip-boards (pens attached with string) for doodling and drawing games. Graph the miles with star stickers. Copying maps of the route allow kids to mark travel progress and learn geography, too. Clip on a zippered plastic bag to hold odds and ends.

**Alphabet Bingo**—each player or team hunts for the letters of the alphabet (in order) they find on billboards and other road signs. Or you can hunt for items that begin with each letter: airplane, billboard, and car, etc.

**Down South**—“I'm going down south and I'm taking...” each player chooses one item such as an umbrella or a burrito. The first player then identifies how he'll use his item: “I'm going to hold my umbrella over my head when it rains.” Players then repeat the line, inserting their own items where his had been: “I'm going to hold my burrito over my head when it rains.”

**Ship Sailing**—what's it loaded with? “Bananas-baboons-barrettes.” Players think of ‘B’ items that could be loaded onto a ship. When you've listed every ‘B’ word on the planet, choose a new letter and start again!

**Compound Word Ladders**—Tom cat—Tom Hanks—hank of hair—hair brush. Make the ladder as tall as you can by adding compound words or phrases that use part of the preceding word.



my guns and wasn't deterred by professionals," Rubell says. "I took them for private tests. I kept them back in kindergarten against the advice of teachers. But later, the teachers apologized to me and said I was right. My children would have floundered if they had been passed to the next grade."

## Follow Your Instincts

Learning disabilities are language based. Therefore, children

learning disabilities in their children are criticized by pediatricians as being overly-anxious. However, Lindamood says these parents should follow their instincts. "Learning disabilities are hidden and show up as symptoms."

## Genetics and Environment

Bruce Pennington, a University of Denver researcher who studies twins in relation to learning disabilities, notes that learning disabilities are a combination of both genetics and environment. Environmental factors include accidents or bacterial sensitivity of the fetus during pregnancy, drugs, toxins or auto-antibodies in the mother's body and placental insufficiency. The home environment is also extremely important because the brain develops flexibly very early on and continues to develop. Carol Achziger, LD specialist at Arapa-

# Taking Action...Emphasizing the Abilities in Disabilities

Barbara Rubell's triplet boys arrived four weeks early and weighed between 5 and 6 pounds each. Although they were surprisingly big babies, Rubell noticed a difference between their development and her singleton's development. She knew that most triplets had difficulty with speech and developmental delays. But at age 2, when they were still pointing and grunting rather than speaking one to two word sentences as most 2-year-olds, Rubell knew something was wrong.

Prematurity in infants can increase the chances for learning disabilities, says Michelle Booth, a Denver, Colorado pediatrician. Because prematurity is common in multiple births, multiples develop learning disabilities more often than singletons and, since development varies from child to child, parents struggle to get a diagnosis. Early intervention is a parent's single most important action in increasing the chances of their multiples catching up to their peers. "I stood by

with inadequate hearing or vision problems or both are often subject to developing learning disabilities, says Patricia Lindamood, director of Lindamood-Bell Learning Processing, Inc. Lindamood's specialty is working with children who are learning-disabled. She says two basis factors indicate learning disabilities. "The first is a lack of phonemic (sound) awareness in a child's spelling or reading. The child can't judge the identification and order of individual sounds. The second is a lack of comprehension, which involves forming visual images of words. These factors are genetically issued to most of us."

Delayed speech development is a definite clue that a child's auditory processing may be impaired. But there's hope. Children with delayed speech can be helped, just not in a pressured or highly academic situation. Instead, they need to learn through play activities, such as practicing mouth and tongue exercises. Frequently, parents who suspect

hoe Community College in Denver, Colorado stresses the need to provide every possible opportunity in the home. Deprivation in nutrition, sleep, reading activities or conversation also affects a child's ability to learn. "The key is providing an enriched environment from day one. This doesn't mean expensive toys and equipment, it means good language, eating and reading habits," Achziger says.

## Early Intervention

Jan Ryther, mother of triplet girls, emphasizes, "I can't stress early intervention enough." At a year old, one of her girls still couldn't sit up. Another had a series of ear infections culminating in surgery, and all three had speech problems. It turns out that her daughter couldn't hear for three years, which impacted her speech development. Now she wears a hearing aid and attends self-contained language classes. At the time, her pediatrician hadn't known where to send her for help. This is a problem many parents face. When the agencies involved in helping children with learning disabilities don't actively



inform the medical community, doctors may not be aware of the resources available to families. The Rythers' ear, nose and throat doctor recommended Ryther contact the school district. She telephoned the district once a week for two months and was finally given an appointment. Although the school district does not test children until age three, other agencies will test younger children. Looking back, Ryther remembers how her daughter chewed holes into her bottle nipples and would never take a pacifier. These signs could have alerted professionals to her growing articulation difficulties.

## Taking Steps

Dee Proctor's first childbirth experience resulted in premature triplets. Even though Proctor had a strong gut feeling that something was wrong, her pediatrician continued to say there was "no problem". Because premature births often cause developmental delays, learning disabilities may not be diagnosed until age two. Proctor recommends intervening from birth to 18-months if you feel that something is not quite right. "I didn't know that my

children were already behind at birth," Proctor says. "I had to do everything myself. I contacted my local United Way—almost every town has one. They can recommend the organizations in your area that specialize in early intervention. I was able to get physical therapy for my triplets." Proctor also benefited from free child care in the form of respite care. "It was a life-saver provided because of the triplets' disabilities," Proctor says. The law mandates that one licensed child-care provider handle up to two children. So, with triplets, two adult child-care givers provided home help. The United Way and federal funds paid for the service. In addition, the triplets attended Head Start preschool.

## Fight for Your Children

The Proctor's triplets fared better in separate classrooms, but their small town didn't offer three different classes at the same grade level. One brother had to be bussed about two hours each way to attend a class elsewhere. When Proctor found out that it's illegal for a child to be on a bus for a time period that's more than half of the time the

child is actually in school, she became her son's advocate and fought for a shorter commute. Now her son is picked up last and dropped off first. "Fight for your children," Proctor says. "Don't worry what other people think. Kids don't like to be different. I make a lot of noise—usually the squeaky wheel gets the grease."

## Dealing with the Differences

One of Barbara Rubell's triplets goes to his school program on a special small school bus. When the other two boys ask why their brother is awarded this distinction, she tells them: "He goes to a school with all his friends from preschool, and we want to keep him with his friends." Rubell keeps in mind that every child is special and that children have to be treated individually even if cries of "not fair" ring out. There's a great deal of learning involved on parents' parts as well as the children. She honors and embraces the questions and feelings that emerge when dealing with learning disabilities, and also recommends empowerment through education. Rubell says sharing the difficult journey makes it best for all. ♥

## Early Warning Signs

**Spoken language:** Delays, disorders and deviations in listening and speaking

**Written language:** Difficulty reading, writing and spelling

**Arithmetic:** Difficulty in performing arithmetic operations or in understanding basic concepts

**Reasoning:** Difficulty in organizing and integrating thoughts

**Memory:** Difficulty in remembering information and instructions

**When considering these symptoms, remember:**

- No one will have all of these symptoms
- Among populations with learning disabilities, some symptoms are more common than others
- All people have at least two or three of these problems to a certain extent

The number of symptoms seen in a particular child is not an indication to whether the disability is mild or severe. Rather, the severity and the existence of clusters comprise the most significant indicators.

*\*Information provided by the Learning Disabilities Association of Colorado*

# Family Health: Their Feet are Made for Walkin’ (...and that’s just what they’ll do!)

By Alice M. Vollmar

**P**arents of infants and toddlers eagerly wait the day this big question will be answered: “When will they take their first steps?” The good news for families is that each baby walks precisely when that baby is ready, say child development experts. There’s no predictable pattern for either singletons or twins, and being a late or early walker has little bearing on the subsequent development of a healthy child. Nor does walking early promise unusual athletic prowess, says Cheryl Halverson, physical therapy supervisor at Minneapolis Children’s Medical Center. “It’s partly genetic and partly environmental, but the normal range for walking is from 10 to 17 months. “Early walking is related more to personality type than to motor skills. Relaxed, limber, loose-jointed children will develop and walk later, but they do catch up. On the other hand, early walkers—more energetic, driven or hyperactive children—are interested in movement, but they aren’t necessarily going to have more athletic ability.”

## Up and Walking

Some twins first walk on the same day, as did Barb Clark’s identical twins, Kristen and Katherine, now 5, who accomplished this feat at 17 ½ months. “One started off and within four hours, the other was walking, too,” recalls Clark. They also walked at a relatively late age, says Clark. “Their heads grew first and their bodies had to catch up. And of course, they didn’t need to walk: They had one another right there all the time.” However, not all identical twins walk simultaneously. Melanie Tuininga’s daughters, Kelly and Katie, now 23 months, walked a month apart—one at 14 months and the other at 15 months. “Kelly worked on walking before she became proficient,” says Tuininga, “but Katie just stood up one day and walked. I’d been told that they might progress at a slower rate because they were a little premature.”

Ginny Worthington’s identical girls, Anne and Lisa, now 19 months old, were born full term but didn’t walk until age 15 months. Then they walked within a week and a half of each other. “When Anne walked, everybody in the house clapped,” says Worthington. “Lisa would stop crawling and clap, too. She learns by observing and just picked up walking from watching Anne.” On the early end of the walking norm, Sheri Peterson’s identical twins, Evelyn and Allison, now 7, walked two months apart—smaller wiry Evelyn at 9 months and Allison and 11 months. Peterson continues, “Allison was more laid back and amused herself by doing other things.”

To Julie Aasgard’s amazement, her son Scott, now 5, walked at 8 months. His twin sister, Kimberly, walked at 10 months. “And I was hoping they’d be later walkers,” laughs Aasgard. “I do believe that Kimberly walked sooner than she might have because of Scott. She’d try to follow him and fall, but kept on trying.” Some parents whose twins walked later in the range of 10-17 months report that their twins entertained each other and, thus, had less motivation to walk sooner. If twins are premature or small, they may walk up to three months later than full-term babies, say authors Averil Clegg and Anne Woolett in *Twins, From Conception to Five Years*. However, physical therapy specialist Halverson says she’s not aware of any statistical data indicating that twins in general walk later than singletons.

## When One Twin Walks and One Twin Crawls

“When Michael walked at 13 months, David was so frustrated,” recalls Tammy Ludgatis. “He’d just stand there and cry. Michael could get around faster, and David didn’t walk until five months later, at 18 months. I felt like I didn’t have twins at that stage.” These

fraternal twins, now 3, continue to approach life differently, with Michael more of an adventurer. Ludgatis found the gap between their walking difficult: “I still had to carry David, and then, Michael wanted to be carried, too, even though he could walk. It also bothered me when people kept saying, ‘Oh, David’s not walking yet’ Have you had him checked out?”

## Don’t Push Walking

“Don’t hurry your baby toward independent standing or walking,” cautions author Penelope Leach in *Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five*. “Standing, cruising (walking by holding on to furniture), and eventually walking are all dependent on the baby’s confidence and his motivation as well as on his muscles and coordination.” Leach says that efforts to push a baby into walking can cause falls that frighten him or her and actually slow down the baby’s progress. However, experts agree that early walking does not cause bowlegs, as parents once feared. In general, identical twins are more likely to walk at about the same time due to their identical genetic makeup; fraternal twins, especially boy/girl pairs, are more likely to walk at different time and ages.

## Now That Your Twins are Walking

Toddler twins keep parents on the alert. Many parents interviewed for this story made their home or certain rooms “walking-baby safe” by using gates and removing unstable furniture, dining room chairs that could be used for climbing, and all breakable items. They also put plugs in outlets and childproof covers on door and cabinet handles.

Julie Aasgard recalls that her twins would walk away from her in opposite directions. “It was harder going places with them, and I had to strap them into a stroller. I tried using a child restraint system with straps attached to both of their little wrists and my wrist, but they would walk around me and we’d get all tangled up.” Pete

White says it was a challenge to have to look two directions at once and to know where her fraternal boy/girl twins, Whitney and William, now 1 ½ were at all times. Barb Clark observes, “Walking changes everything. Once Kristen and Katherine started walking, they started climbing. We stripped the living room and dining room, and they lived in that area.” The early walking stage is sometimes trying, sometimes amusing and always memorable. “When both of our twins finally were walking,” Tammy Ludgatis says, “it was just fun. They felt so independent! And the smiles on their faces when they first mastered walking were wonderful.” ♥

## WALKING PATTERNS

Pete White, the mother of fraternal boy/girl twins, William and Whitney, worries that Whitney now 1½, is bowlegged. “Our doctor doesn’t seem concerned, but it does concern me,” says White. “I’m keeping an eye on her.” Beginning walkers may be bowlegged or knock-kneed and “toe-in” or “toe-out” significantly. Not to worry, say the experts: In most cases, these patterns correct themselves as the child gains walking skills. “The bones have a different configuration in young children,” explains Cheryl Halverson, Minneapolis Children’s Medical Center’s physical therapy supervisor. “Almost always, the bones remodel as children walk. If you’re concerned about your child’s walking pattern, do check it out with your pediatrician. Usually, though, doctors won’t recommend doing anything before the age of 5 because most problems resolve themselves by then.”

During regular examinations, pediatricians check babies’ feet, legs and hips for abnormalities such as dislocated hips. Occasionally, a dislocated hip won’t be discovered until the child starts walking. According to Halverson, you should check with a pediatrician if your child isn’t walking by 17 months or walks with a limp, if one of a pair of identical twins walks much later than the other, or if one or both twins persist in toe walking. “Toe walking is normal when babies start to walk, but not if it continues beyond six months after they start walking,” adds Halverson. Causes of prolonged toe walking include sensory disorders, such as when a child finds foot stimulation noxious; motor control problems; the rare case of congenital abnormality involving a shortened calf muscle; and cerebral palsy. “Toe walking is the classic sign of cerebral palsy,” says Halverson. “Cerebral palsy is a one-time injury to the brain, near or during birth: It’s not degenerative. But there is a high risk associated with twin birth due to more incidences of prematurity and birth difficulties.” Along with toe walking, symptoms include stiffness in legs, spasticity, and inability to freely move the feet, says Halverson. Bring any of these symptoms to your pediatrician’s attention, as it’s important to start intervention measures right away—stretching tight muscles, strengthening weak muscles, and helping the child learn normal ways to control the body.

“Mild cerebral palsy usually shows up when a baby starts walking,” says Halverson. “But parents may suspect the child is not using the leg properly before that.” She notes that leg cramps may also signal developmental problems or can just be growing pains. “Be aware if your child is going through a growth spurt—a common time for muscle cramps because the muscles are being stretched as the bones grow. Ask for a referral to a specialist if muscle cramps last more than one month. The specialist you go to determines which factors get ruled out. For example, an orthopedist looks at bone structure, while a neurologist checks reflexes, muscle tone and formation of the brain.”

She tells parents to trust themselves: “If you have a doubt, even though your pediatrician doesn’t think it’s significant, say, ‘We value your opinion, but would you please refer us to a specialist anyway?’ Or go to a different pediatrician for a second opinion.

### Shoes for Your Walkers?

Walking brings up the question of shoes. Today, experts advise against putting toddlers in stiff shoes. Young walkers who go barefoot at home and in safe places strengthen their ankles and leg and foot muscles, and build strong arches. Flexible, well-fitting sneakers are recommended for their first steps out into the world. ♥

celebrating families of multiples



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# Their Most Prized Possession...

Preserving memories for families that have suffered the greatest loss

By Christa D. Reed



At 15 weeks into her third pregnancy, Denise was measuring very big. An ultrasound confirmed that she was carrying twins! “I was shocked to hear the news but my grandmother is a twin so they do run in our family.” She frantically placed a call to her husband, Brennon, to tell him the big news.

Five weeks later and hoping to learn the sexes of their twins, the couple went to their 20 week prenatal appointment for their routine ultrasound. “That’s when we were told that they had discovered some abnormalities in Baby ‘A’s’ heart and she had a severe cleft palate.” Denise and Brennon quickly agreed that a cleft palate could be fixed through surgery these days...but it wasn’t until they both realized that this was just the start of the horrific news they would hear that day and before the appointment ended they would learn through an amnio that one of their precious twins, Currine, was diagnosed with Trisomy 13, an extremely rare genetic disorder.

At first doctors believed that baby Currine did not have a stomach (they found later that she actually did) so they didn’t think she would be able to take any fluids in and they did not want it to affect the growth, development and survival of Baby B, Jolee. Another concern for doctors was the possibility of Denise developing preeclampsia since that is very common with Trisomy 13 pregnancies. “At that point, our doctor recommended that we terminate Currine to give Jolee a chance to live but we also knew that there were some risks of losing both babies if we did,” adds Denise.

“Looking back, I think that was the absolute hardest day in my pregnancy because we just didn’t know anything about this disorder and were just sitting in the office in shock and not even sure what we could do.”

“So we left that appointment feeling devastated and went home and talked with family and called some friends from church who were also doctors and we talked with them about some of our options.”

After researching the Internet Denise found only four other cases of twin pregnancies where one baby had Trisomy 13 and the other baby did not. In all four cases, each family made the decision not to terminate

their baby and to carry their twins as long as possible and most even carried their twins to term. “So we made the decision to move forward with my twin pregnancy and we would give this a try for as long as we could.”

## A Shot from an Angel

Isn’t it interesting when the forces of life connect you to people that you really need at the exact point that you really need them? That is what happened next for Denise and Brennon all while going through this terrible ordeal.

Their oldest daughter, Madison was playing on a new soccer team and one of her teammate’s moms was pregnant, too. She said something about her c-sections and just mentioned in passing she had one child that wasn’t with her anymore. Denise shared with her what they were going through and her husband came up to Brennon shortly after that practice and asked if they had ever heard about Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep (NILMDTS), a national nonprofit foundation offering gentle and beautiful photography services in a compassionate and sensitive manner for families suffering a

loss of their infant. NILMDTS was co-founded by photographer Sandy Puc and Cheryl Haggard in 2005, shortly after Haggard lost a child of her own, a son named Maddux. Haggard’s husband contacted Puc to take photos of their son. In the brief years since, NILMDTS has taken off and become a worldwide nonprofit with more than 7,000 voluntary photographers in more than 25 countries reaching out, free of charge, to help people hold on to a brief—but precious—moment in their life.

At a family’s request, a NILMDTS Affiliated Photographer will come to the hospital or hospice location and conduct a sensitive and private portrait session. The portraits are then professionally retouched and presented to the families on an archival DVD or CD that can be used to print portraits of their cherished baby. Their entire network of affiliated photographers graciously donates their time and talents and they offer their services at no cost to these families.

To these amazing volunteer photographers, this type of work is really not about their professional lives, but their hearts leading them in this direction. They put aside their competitive nature and work together strictly as volunteers and never at any time ever promote their own business.

Soon after learning about Denise and Brennon’s situation, Betsy Strafach, an affiliated NILMDTS photographer and area coordinator in Northern Colorado quickly got in touch with Denise and Brennon and invited the family to come to her studio for some prenatal portraits at 30 weeks into their pregnancy. “We just

## What is Trisomy 13?

Trisomy 13 occurs in about one out of every 16,000 newborns and occurs when extra DNA from chromosome 13 appears in some or all of the body’s cells. The extra material interferes with normal fetal development and most cases are not passed down through families (inherited) but instead, the events that lead to Trisomy 13 occur in either the sperm or the egg that forms the fetus.

Trisomy 13, is also called Patau syndrome, and is a chromosomal condition associated with severe intellectual disability and physical abnormalities in many parts of the body. Individuals with Trisomy 13 often have heart defects, brain or spinal cord abnormalities, very small or poorly developed eyes (microphthalmia), extra fingers and/or toes, an opening in the lip (a cleft lip) with or without an opening in the roof of the mouth (a cleft palate), and weak muscle tone (hypotonia). Due to the presence of several life-threatening medical problems, many infants with Trisomy 13 die within their first days or weeks of life. Only five to 10 percent of children with this condition live past their first year.

love those photos of our family and we were so glad that she offered to do this extra studio session for us,” said Denise.

Strafach joined NILMDTS in September 2006 after reading an article about the nonprofit foundation. “I felt it would be a wonderful way for me to “give back” and something just told me I had to get involved,” adds Betsy. In Northern Colorado there are five affiliated photographers and since 2006 they have already helped over 35 families suffering from an infant loss. “Each situation is so different and unique. It’s extremely powerful when you are there with these people in their darkest hour and their deepest grief. There is something so intimate and personal about being there with them in that moment,” Strafach said. “It’s easy for me to do this for others because I know it will help people heal in a different way—whether they know it or not.”

“I always remember that no matter how sad and difficult this type of work is, we are helping how this family will heal forever. To see how grateful and touched families are when they see their images and knowing that is something they would never have had if you had not been there, makes this work very rewarding,” adds Strafach.

## Preserving 16-Hours of Life

They had continued to monitor both babies and Denise’s pregnancy had progressed to 36 weeks gestation when on January 4, Currine’s water broke and Denise began feeling strong contractions. As the couple made their way to the hospital they called Betsy so she could meet them there and take photographs of the birth and of the few precious moments they would have with their baby Currine. “I was shaking and scared and having severe contractions. I was extremely nervous because I had no idea what to expect and how long we would even have with her,” adds Denise.

As Betsy took photographs and the video camera was rolling, Currine was born at 2:35 AM and her twin sister Jolee was born two minutes later. “My mom brought in our older girls at around 5:00 AM because we wanted them to hold her and see her and we didn’t want them to be upset if they never got to meet her,” said Denise. “That was a really good visit and we were so happy they did come in and they were able to be in some of the family photographs that Betsy was taking for us.”

Doctors explained that Currine would probably have difficulties breathing normally and would turn purple, gasp for air and eventually stop breathing on her own. “Eight hours after they were born, Currine began gasping for air and we thought that was it so we said our tearful goodbyes but then she started breathing normally again and this happened several times that day.” Baby Currine had two or three more of those breathing episodes before eventually passing away at around 6:30 PM on January 5, 2009, 16 precious hours after her birth.

## Their Most Prized Possession

It’s only been five months since the birth of their twins and the loss of Currine. The family is still trying very hard to heal and move forward all while preserving Currine’s memory and making sure twin sister, Jolee knows she had a twin sister who was strong and fought very hard to be with them, even if only for a short time on earth.



Memories can fade and get cloudy so Denise highly recommends that people do have these photos taken because they give her back those precious moments with more clarity and honor. “I can’t say enough about NILMDTS and what they do for people’s lives. The photos and DVD that Betsy gave to us is the most cherished and priceless thing we own and by far our most valuable and prized possession.”

Learn more about NILMDTS by visiting [www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org](http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org) ♥

*Photography by Betsy Strafach, Area Coordinator/Certified Trainer, Affiliate Photographer with Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. For more information about Betsy Strafach, go to [www.portraitsbybetsy.com](http://www.portraitsbybetsy.com).*





standably, many parents with limited help want to spend the time away from their children to enjoy their alone time or that well-deserved date night with their husbands. Nevertheless, I have learned through my work with many families that resistance to or lack of awareness about the importance of spending alone time is not strictly a matter of logistics, finances, or inconvenience.

There are a number of possible explanations. My friend Sheila, similar to many other moms of multiples, treated her fraternal boy/girl twins as in-

She relishes the time and rejoices that doctor appointments can be handled one at a time!

My personal experience with alone time is a bit different and perhaps illustrative of the more plausible explanation as to why parents of twins do not consider alone time with each twin as a priority. Being an identical twin and the mother of three singletons before I gave birth to my fraternal twin sons, I did not subscribe to what I call the “twin mystique”. I define this term to refer to a romanticized or idealized notion of the twin bond. Unlike many mothers of twins, I did not have worrisome concerns that my spending alone time with Jonny and David would interfere or jeopardize their connection. On the contrary, based upon my own experience growing up in a culture that perpetually thinks about twinship as a magical and mystical experience, I cherished the separate experiences

in the belief that this would strengthen my bond with each child. While this thinking may

# The Mystique of Twinship

By Joan A. Friedman, Ph.D.

I was having coffee with a girlfriend who had just finished reading my book *Emotionally Healthy Twins*. With a perplexed and distraught look on her face, she confided that she felt upset and disappointed about the fact that it had NEVER even occurred to her to spend time alone with her fraternal twins. She was shocked as well as confused that she had not thought about this idea at all. Furthermore, as she did have help at home most weekdays when her twins were babies, she had the luxury and the opportunity to spend alone time. She admitted that in retrospect, spending alone time with each baby might have provided the most feasible and logical solution to help soothe the helplessness and guilt she experienced as she attempted to bond with both babies.

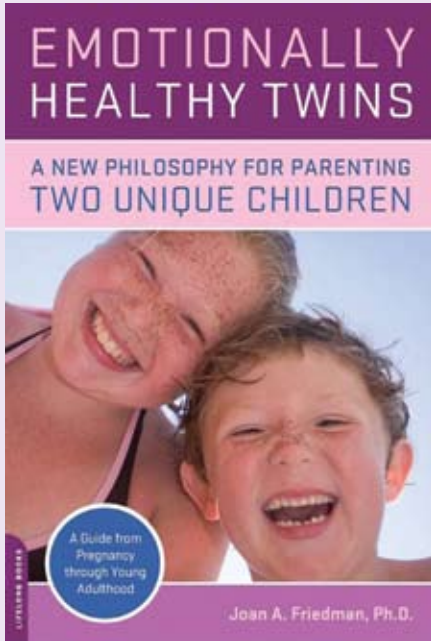
I reassured my friend Sheila that many parents of twins do not embrace this idea for lots of different reasons. From a practical standpoint, without help from outside caretakers, the notion of alone time seems unrealistic. Under-

dividuals. She celebrated their uniqueness in terms of names and clothing; yet, this mindset did not extend to the importance of spending alone time with each baby. She felt that the triadic connection between her babies and herself blinded her to the importance of spending time alone with each of them. She reminisced, with a sad smile on her face, about the time her husband had come home from work to find Sheila and the babies crying - all three of them huddled together on the blanket-covered floor. She remembered her reactions after seeing those first ultrasound images of the fetuses. The indelible visual memory of the two babies embarking upon this journey inside of her conceptually created a threesome that continued well after the babies were born. Also, Sheila said that taking care of TWO babies at the same time gave her a sense of success, mastery and competence – feelings she desperately longed for in the face of sleep deprivation, helplessness, and depression. Looking back on this time she reflected that it did not occur to her to go out with each one separately because the trio had achieved a harmonious rhythm. Sheila spends alone time now with her four-year-old son and daughter whenever she can.

seem counterintuitive, I believe that it is sound advice because a child’s sense of self is inextricably linked to his attachment with his parents. In my struggle to feel bonded to Jonny and David, I took both boys out separately from the time they were born. It did not occur to me that I was breaking any taboo or interfering with their relationship. In addition, time alone helped to minimize the effects of the twin attention on the other children. My efforts to provide both boys with individual attention whenever possible were motivated by my own struggles about feeling as if I were half of a whole and recognizing that *being seen* is not the same as *being known*.

Cultural taboos based upon the “twin mystique” mentality also make it difficult for some families to plan for alone time. A mom in my twin support group told me that separating siblings – whether they be twins or singletons – in order to spend alone time is simply unacceptable in her culture. She shared that she and her older brother did everything together outside of school.

As she reflected upon it, she realized that it was similar to having a twin and that her parents played a secondary role in her life because she felt more connected to her brother. With utmost candor, she admitted that she would not be able to tolerate the criticism and disapproval of her extended family if she were to spend time alone with each of her twins.



Of course, all of us have our unique life circumstances and complex variables underscore our parenting decisions. The parental longing to keep twins paired because of the twin mystique, the pregnancy and birth experiences, and the sheer fact that they look so precious together distract us from focusing upon the importance of nurturing the parent-child connection. Committing to alone time and working through protests and anxieties on the part of both the twins and their parents is an important goal. A strong bond with one's parents is the cornerstone of healthy emotional growth. ♥

*Joan A. Friedman, Ph.D. is an identical twin that has over thirty years of experience as a psychotherapist specializing in the treatment of twin-related issues. Using her personal experience as well as her research working with mothers of twins, she comes to the topic with unmatched depth and breadth of experience. She is currently working on a book about adult twins and attachment issues. The mother of five children, including twin boys, she lives in the Los Angeles area with her husband.*



**Dr. Friedman's book, Emotionally Healthy Twins can be purchased from TWINS Magazine's TwinsShopper at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) or by calling our toll free number at 1888-55-TWINS.**



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

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# A Cultural Twist on Childcare

By Amy Russ

Childcare... That one little word can be a source of extreme emotional and financial anxiety for parents, especially in a turbulent economy.

While compromising quality to save on cost is a viable way for families to cut back on many of their household expenditures, childcare is not one of them. Parents don't want to gamble with their kids' safety or well-being, nor should they have to. That's why more and more families, especially those with twins or higher-order multiples, are turning to au pair services for flexible, affordable and superior care for their little ones.

Cultural Care Au Pair is among the world's leading au pair agencies with more than 65,000 au pairs placed in American homes in the last 20 years. Of the 8,000 au pairs currently working in

the United States via Cultural Care's placement opportunities, about 1,200 (15 percent) of those are placed with families that have twins or multiples.

Headquartered in Cambridge, Mass., Cultural Care Au Pair is regulated by the U.S. Department of State and has an extensive network of recruitment, screening and orientation offices worldwide. Its mission is to give qualified young people from countries around the world the opportunity for a unique and rewarding international exchange. The au pair lives with an American family for one year at a time in exchange for providing 45 hours of childcare per week.

Now for the million-dollar question: How much does it cost? Cultural Care Au Pair's service is roughly \$320 per week and includes a stipend for the au pair and the agency's fee for screening and placing the au pair and coordinating the paperwork and logistics of

such placement. That reflects a substantial savings compared to daycare centers and home daycares that charge per week per child and give only slight discounts when caring for multiple children from the same family.

According to Cultural Care Au Pair and a report recently published by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) called *Parents and the High Price of Child Care: 2008 Update*, "the average price of full-time care for one infant in a center was as high as \$14,591 a year." While this is comparable with Cultural Care Au Pair's program cost, the price for the Cultural Care Au Pair program remains constant no matter how many children a family has.

"I think the biggest misconception surrounding our service is that it's only for wealthy families," explains Susan Robinson, Cultural Care Au Pair's vice president of communications. "It's very affordable for most families, and for families with two



or three or more children who are not yet school-aged, the cost per child for quality, full-time care is significantly lower than other options available.”

Additionally, as daycare centers are raising rates to respond to today’s economic landscape, Cultural Care Au Pair recently announced its “Peace of Mind Guarantee” that commits to matching and maintaining its 2008 rates throughout 2009. It also offers some important financial safeguards if a family suffers an involuntary job loss.

In addition to being surprisingly affordable, Cultural Care Au Pair’s program offers flexibility that accommodates many families’ variable schedules. Host families work with their au pair to determine a week-to-week schedule for when the 45 hours of childcare are provided. Such flexibility is ideal for the many American parents who have a less conventional work week than the days of old.

“A majority of the families in our program have 2 or more children and want flexible childcare options because their schedules may vary from week to week,” says Robinson. “It’s difficult to find childcare that works around a flex work schedule or telecommuting. Our service offers in-home care with flexibility that is often difficult for parents to find.”

A key ingredient to Cultural Care’s success since it was formed in 1989 is the quality of care provided by the au pairs enrolled in its program. Each au pair candidate no matter her country of origin goes through the same rigorous screening process and background checks, must have prior childcare experience and must be proficient in conversational English. Only the best candidates make the cut and those who do must go through Au Pair Training School upon arriving in the United States. Once an au pair is settled in with a family, she also must participate in Cultural Care’s Continuing Education Program that has mandatory sessions scheduled throughout the year.

Au pairs travel on a J-1 cultural exchange visa and, upon its expiration; au pairs have the option to extend their visa for up to 12 months. According to Robinson, more than 30 percent of its au pairs extend for a second year and most of those who extend choose to stay with the same family during their extension.



That brings up yet another benefit to Cultural Care Au Pair’s program —the lasting bond created between an au pair and the children she lives with and cares for throughout the year. The au pair-child relationship provides a foundation upon which the au pair learns about American culture while the children learn about the au pair’s life and culture in another part of the world.

Robinson said that families with twins and multiples tend to be among the most vocal about the benefits of the au pair program. “Every year we accept nominations for Au Pair of the Year and it seems that a lot of the nominations come from families with multiples,” said Robinson. “Au pairs are a god send to these families with multiples and they seem to really appreciate the extra help and care that an au pair provides.” ♡

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# TWINS™

# Lightening Can Strike the Same Place Twice:

## Moms Share Their Experiences on Parenting Two Sets of Twins



By Christina Baglivi Tinglof

Sofia & Max, Fraternal, 27 months; Ava & Alex, Fraternal 9 months

**W**hen Helene Gaither's boy-girl twins, Cole and Isabella, were 21-months old, the Stockton, California mom received some shocking news from her obstetrician. She was pregnant yet again with twins. Since Gaither and her husband had struggled initially with infertility, finally conceiving Cole and Isabella on their third IVF cycle, the idea that she was pregnant without any medical assistance, let alone being pregnant with twins, was a miracle. "We were definitely more surprised when we found out we were expecting another set of twins," she says. "I walked out of the doctor's office in a daze, just completely stunned. It took us a few weeks to really wrap our brains around the whole idea!" Yet nine months later, fraternal twin boys, Garrett and Landon, proved that a family can be doubly blessed—twice!

Jenny Walkowiak has a similar story. After a year and a half of dealing with infertility she tried IVF and

got pregnant with fraternal twin girls, Audrey and Amelia, on her first round. But not more than three months after their birth, this West Allis, Wisconsin mom was expecting for a second time. "Just to find out I was pregnant again was a shock," she says. But that was only half her surprise. When she went in for her initial ultrasound, she laid anxiously on the examining table as her husband Andrew watched the monitor. "His jaw dropped slightly and I heard the doctor say, 'Uh-oh. They're mono,'" she says. "Andrew started laughing. I was crying." Not long after, identical twin girls, Alice and Abigail were welcomed into the family.

"Everyone, the ultrasound technician included, assured me it was just one," says Destany Dueweke of Davisburg, Michigan of the day she learned she was pregnant with her second set of fraternal twins, Gabriel and Sophia. (Big sisters, Adeline and Emelia, are just 15 months older.) "Everyone

kept saying, 'What are the odds?'" Good question.

### How Common are Multiple Multiples?

Although many factors influence twinning (family history, the age of the mother, medical intervention, and even race), your chances of having twins overall is about 1 in 33 pregnancies, or about 3 percent. (The odds are higher for spontaneous twins.) But what is the likelihood of having a second set of twins? We know that women who naturally conceive fraternal twins are about four times more likely to have another set in subsequent pregnancies than mothers who give birth to singletons, but what about women who have identical twins? And what about women who conceive multiples after Assisted Reproductive Technology like in-vitro fertilization? What are their chances? It's a little trickier to estimate these situations as many published statistics are anecdotal. Some reports, for instance, say that a mother of identi-

cal twins has a 1 in 70,000 chance of having identical twins again. If a woman undergoes IVF she also increases her chances of twinning especially if more than one embryo is transferred regardless of the number of past pregnancies. On the other hand, some couples that dealt with infertility in the past may become lenient with contraception after the birth of their twins thinking that it's nearly impossible to get pregnant on their own. Yet many find that they spontaneously conceive twins just a few months later.

That's exactly what happened to Kat Whiteley of Seattle, Washington. Her fraternal twin sons, Brenden and Trevin, were the result of IVF. "With the boys, it wasn't a surprise we were pregnant with twins," she says. "We had so much trouble getting pregnant the first time, that we didn't take any pre-

cautions after that to prevent pregnancy.” But when her boys were just 18 months old, Whiteley found out she was pregnant with identical twin girls, Samantha and Jessica. “When I came home from the doctor’s office, my husband thought something was wrong with the pregnancy because, he said, I was white as a ghost.”

## Is it Easier the Second Time Around?

Once the shock of expecting a second set of twins sinks in and the reality that two more are once again on their way, there’s no time to sit around. Parents of multiple multiples spring into action making plans. All used the lessons learned from the first go-around to better manage their growing families and hectic lives.

“We had a schedule ready before my second set even came home from the hospital,” explains Lisa Sain of Houston, Texas and mother to four-year-old Jake and Emily, and 19-month-old Nate and Audrey. “We had everything planned out from how we’d get the laundry done to grocery shopping, what the feeding schedule would be, and who would do which feedings so we could both get enough sleep at night.” She says that all the planning was worth the effort as the critical first six months at home were more relaxed.

To keep her household running smoothly, Jenny Walkowiak devised a message center. “We have part of our hallway dedicated to two dry erase boards, two dry erase calendars, and two corkboards,” she says. All her girls are color coded so Walkowiak can easily keep up with their appointments, school work, parties, and after-school activities. “In this hall we also have hooks for their back packs so that I can go through them and put stuff on the board right away.”

When her second set of twins came along, Nancy Behe of Ebensburg, Pennsylvania still had her first set in diapers! She kept sane by maintaining a daily diary noting what and when her children ate, how long they slept, whose diaper was changed and when, and anything else that was important to each child. She also kept her kids on a consistent routine of eating, sleeping, and playing. “Now everyone is pretty much self sufficient,” she says of four-year-old identical twin boys, Luke and Logan, and two-year-old identical twin girls, Lauren and Leah. “The children can dress themselves, feed themselves, get around on their own and play without being entertained by an adult. They also all sleep through the night!”

Teaching each child to be independent is a priority for Kat Whiteley, too. “I’ve learned to have the kids do as much as they can for themselves as soon as they are able,” she says. For instance, she has her children pick out their own clothes and dress themselves, eliminating the chore (not to mention many an argument) of doing it for them. She also has her kids pack their own lunches for school, a huge boon to anyone tired of making countless peanut butter and jelly sandwiches each week.

Keeping organized is a top priority for Susan Everingham, too. With five children including 17-year-old Eileen, 13-year-old fraternal twin girls, Emily and Natalie, and 10-year-old fraternal twin boys, Quinn and Blake, this Chesapeake, Virginia mom is a meticulous note taker, a huge help when dealing with school issues. “I keep files on each child and take notes at every meeting. I date the notes and write who was attending,” she says. “I write my questions before the meeting and write down their answers. This has saved me so many headaches as I often need to refer back to something.”

But these moms also recognize what the stress of twins, let alone two sets of them, can put on them personally, and that it’s important to take one day at a time or even, as one mom put it, one hour at a time.

“I knew multiples can be hard on a marriage,” Susan Everingham says, “and we’d have to work extra hard to be patient with each other and to communicate nicely.”

Helene Gaither plays in a local soccer league and takes evening walks with friends to reduce her stress and rejuvenate physically, mentally, and emotionally. “I also put reasonable expectations on myself, and for that reason, I don’t feel like I fail each day,” she adds.

Many of these moms reach out to others through online groups such as TWINS™ Magazine’s online Message Board forum (<http://forum.twins-magazine.com>) or the one that Jenny Walkowiak started. (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MultipleMultiples>) “We have different issues that arise from those parents with one set of twins,” she explains. “It’s been nice to vent with others who have been there.”

## Multiple Money Matters

Although a second set of twins hasn’t put a crimp in these families’

lifestyles, it sure has cost a pretty penny. What is their number one monthly expense? Groceries and diapers.

“When the youngest twins were born we had four kids in diapers,” says Lisa Swain. “That’s about \$250 a week for diapers alone! At the peak of the babies’ formula consumption (I breastfed for four months) we spent an estimated \$150 a week. Add to that number \$100 a week in solid baby food and we were spending \$2,000 a month on diapers and infant food.” Fortunately, she says, it was a short-term problem as kids got bigger and graduated to the potty and table food.

Many parents say that school supplies add up quickly as do after-school clubs, music lessons, and sports. Traveling and staying at hotels take careful planning, too, as families with more than one set of twins usually need two hotel rooms or a suite. But many moms employ savvy cost-cutting techniques such as learning to cut their kids’ hair, buying clothes at consignment shops or their twins’ clubs semi-annual clothing sales, buying food and cooking in bulk, and searching for all kinds of discount coupons online.

“We save a lot on baby expenses because I’m breastfeeding and using cloth diapers,” says Heather Eckstein of Augusta, Georgia. The mom to six-year-old Matthew, four-year-old Joshua, three-year-old identical twins Leila and Sarah, and eight-month-old identical twins Nathan and Ryan estimates that she’s saved \$10,000 since having six kids in five years.

## Instant Celebrities

Parents of twins everywhere draw a lot of attention from curious strangers. So you can just imagine what it’s like for these families to go out in public. Even a simple trip to the supermarket can turn into star-stalking pandemonium. Many moms try to be polite only to find that it takes twice as long to get their errands done forcing them to employ other techniques such as avoiding eye contact, offering short and sweet answers, and leaving the quad stroller at home (apparently a dead give-away).

“We have had people take pictures of us everywhere from Niagara Falls to our local zoo and even in the produce section of the supermarket,” says Heather Eckstein. On a recent trip to Washington D.C., her family was

~ Continued on Page 47

# “Double-Double Takes—TWINS™ with Multiple-Multiples!”



Tate & Tanner, ID, Mirror Image, 23 years; Alea & Kylie, ID, 7.5 months (Tate and Tanner are Alea & Kylie's uncles)



Angelina & Isabella, ID 4 years; Joseph & Giovanni, ID 18 months



Skyler & Krysta, FR 5 years; Kaleb & Abigail, FR 10 months



Annalie & Lauren, FR 9.5 years; Heather & Gianna, FR 4.5 years



Roan & Rowdy, ID, 5 years; Reed & Rhett, FR 3 months



Luke & Lexi, FR 4 years; Lola & Leah, FR 22 months

# Magazine Readers



Isabel & Sofia, ID, 4 years; Thomas & James, FR 4 months



Chase & Dane, ID, 2 years; Audrey & Brianna, ID 4 years



Alex & Madeline FR 6 years; Katherine, 2 years; and Kevin & Elizabeth, FR 9 months.



Cameron & Jackson, FR, 4 years; Caleb & Colton, FR 12 months

~ Continued from Page 45

stopped two dozen times while strolling along the National Mall. "It was very surreal," she laughs.

For some families like Amy Rea's of Atlanta, Georgia, having fraternal twins (four-year-olds Jack and Nate, and three-year-olds Ashley and Blake) helps to keep the comments at bay especially now that they are older. "They're all different heights and I don't dress them alike," she says. "So we don't get too many comments anymore."

Yet as twins get older, many younger sets actually catch up in size to their older twin siblings setting off a whole host of different questions from on-lookers. Just ask Karen Lackey. On a recent outing, she took a child from each set of twins to mix things up a bit. Although a year-and-a-half apart, both children are close in size. "Someone asked me if they were twins, and I had to think about my answer," she says. "I said that they both were but not to each other. The woman just looked at me like, 'Huh?'"

Aside from the obvious inconveniences, all this celebrity status can be especially hard on singleton siblings. "My singleton, the oldest, is acutely aware of the attention her siblings get and our family as a whole. I know it has caused a lot of jealousy and a skewed view of her world," explains Kris Powell. This Indianapolis, Indiana mother to five including seven-year-old Karen, five-year-old fraternal twin girls Brynne and Marissa, and three-year-old identical twin boys, Erik and Trent, encourages her single-born daughter to join social groups where she can shine on her own but sometimes it's not easy. "She has expressed to me several times that she wishes she had a twin, so she would have a playmate and not feel so alone or different from her brothers and sisters," she says. ♥

*Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 13-year-old fraternal twin boys and a 10-year-old singleton. She's also the author*

*of the just released, second edition of Double Duty: The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins, and Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples. Her website is [www.talk-about-twins.com](http://www.talk-about-twins.com).*



**Chaos 2 Calm** by Tonia Tomlin. *Chaos 2 Calm: The Moms-of-Multiples' Guide to an Organized Family* is the definitive



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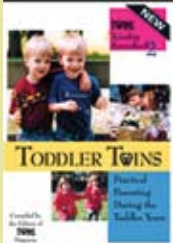
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**The Multiples Manual** by Lynn Lorenz (2nd edition). Preparing and Caring for Twins or Triplets-- 1,002 Tips for Expectant Mothers! Author Lynn Lorenz is an identical twin herself, and the mother



of triplets and a singleton. She's an accountant by profession, and developed this wonderful handbook in her spare time (yikes!) to help simplify life for other parents when they're expecting twins or triplets, and after they have their babies. This updated second edition is loaded with tips, and tells you all the things you need to plan for and think about ... everything from the perfect shower gifts (and what to steer clear of!), breastfeeding issues, to safety-proofing your house and sleeping peacefully through the night. This is a great guide for parenting twins from pregnancy to preschool. **288 pages, softbound. Price: \$17.95**

**Twinship Sourcebook 2: Toddler Twins. Practical Parenting During the Toddler Years** compiled by the editors of TWINS™ Magazine. Published by TWINS™ Magazine. Toddler-aged twins are a true joy for parents, and a real challenge at times. This wonderful collection of insightful articles from the pages of Twins™ Magazine has been carefully selected by the editors to provide parents of growing, busy children a detailed resource covering a variety of topics that are of great concern. Although no two sets of twins are alike, this best-selling guidebook by parenting experts provides helpful information from real experiences that can be applied to raising any toddler-aged twins. Topics covered include discipline, biting and fighting, physical development, toilet training, fears, sleeping, language development, eating, identity, play and creativity and much more. "Toddler Twins" provides parents with practical solutions and critical background information that will help in problem solving and determining the proper course of action with their own twins. It's a great resource and a fantastic gift, too. **198 pages, softbound. Price: \$14.95**



**The Parents Guide to Raising Twins from Pre-birth to First School Days - the Essential Book for Those Expecting Two or More** by Elizabeth Friedrich and Cherry Rowland. Now in its eighth printing, "The Parent's Guide to Raising Twins" has been a favorite of new parents of multiples for many years. Authors Elizabeth Friedrich and Cherry Rowland are mothers of twins themselves, and offer personal experiences as well as helpful and enlightening stories from other parents and medical personnel. Carefully researched, the authors include chapters on pregnancy, the birth of twins and the months immediately after birth, adjustments in the family to the arrival of the twins, parenting from their early months to their toddler years, and treating twins as individuals. All in all, this book delivers a bounty of useful guidance. **304 pages, softbound. Price: \$13.95**



**Emotionally Healthy Twins** by Dr. Joan A. Friedman. Most parents try to treat their twins as individuals, but most unwittingly undermine their best intentions because they lack a practical set of guidelines for raising emotionally healthy multiples. Emotionally Healthy Twins, by Dr. Joan A. Friedman, draws on her unique experience as a twin, as a mother of twins, and as a psychotherapist and outlines the seven key concepts for helping twins develop into self-realized, unique individuals while offering parents specific strategies for each stage in their children's growth. From how to set up the nursery to handling play dates and extracurricular activities, deciding on same or separate classroom education to encouraging grandparents and other family members to think beyond the pair to see individuals, Emotionally Healthy Twins will become the standard reference for parenting twins. **Paperback, 221 pages. Price: \$15.95**



**Identical Strangers: A Memoir of Twins Separated and Reunited** by Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein. NEW! "Once you find someone" writes Paula Bernstein, "You can't unfind her." Paula and Elyse Schein are identical twins, who were separated as infants by an adoption agency and lived completely separate lives until age 35, when Elyse sought out the twin she never knew. Paula, a married mother and successful writer living in New York, was stunned when she learned from the agency she had an identical twin sister. Elyse, a successful filmmaker who lived in Paris, was equally surprised with the news. She knew she had been adopted, but was completely unaware of her twin. Even more surprising for both is that Elyse and Paula had been part of a secret academic study regarding the separation of twins. Reunited, Paula and Elyse learn how they are similar and how they are different. Sharing mannerisms, speech, allergies and love of movies, the two find the similarities eerie - almost like seeing yourself from the outside. Writing with honesty about their life-altering discovery that a stranger shares their DNA, Elyse and Paula write in alternating voices of their journey toward the intimacy of twins that was denied them for much of their lives. Publisher's Weekly calls their story "a transfixing memoir" while Reader's Digest declares "Identical Strangers" "poignant."



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**Oh Yes You Can Breastfeed Twins!** by April Rudat, MS Ed, RD, LDN. A successful breasteeder of girl/boy twins, dietitian April Rudat provides expecting and new mothers a comprehensive and easy-to-understand handbook. Using up-to-date research and her own practical experience, April covers everything a new mother needs to know about breastfeeding her young babies. Each woman's experience in breastfeeding is unique and can bring about frustrations, fears and indecision. You'll learn about the perfect nursing chairs for breastfeeding, common nursing problems, pumping, breastfeeding outside the home and sleeping through the night. April provides detailed instructions on nursing twins, and tips and suggestions on everything from clothing to saving money to constructing a practical nursery to handling spouses. **252 pages, softbound 5.5 x 8.5" Price: \$19.95**



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**Parenting twins, triplets or more...**

*A Guide for Parents Who Want Their Twins to Share a Classroom*

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SPECIAL REPORT SPECIAL REPORT  
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**A Guide for Parents Who Want Their Twins to Share a Classroom - Special Report**  
Compiled by the Editors of TWINS™ Magazine and Published by TWINS™ Magazine. For some multiple children, the decision to place each child in separate classrooms can be a traumatic experience. Twins that have been particularly close throughout their lives are abruptly separated at school, bringing loneliness, anxiety and even feelings of being punished. For these twins, a common classroom is the only decision a parent can make, but it is a decision best made through close consultation with the teacher and school administrators.

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who have been through the experience. Psychologists also offer opinions and experiences about placing twins in common classrooms and explain how separation is not always the best option. **24 pages, Price: \$8.95**

**Multiples Aged 7 to 12: The Middle Years - Special Report.** Compiled by the Editors of TWINS™ Magazine and Published by TWINS™ Magazine. Twins, triplets and higher order multiples entering their middle years of childhood bring many new challenges to parents overseeing their emotional and intellectual growth. How does a parent assist their twins' self-confidence? How is individuality encouraged among twins? What behavior is acceptable? What behavior is unacceptable - and how does a parent handle lies, "bad" language and a lack of manners? This special report contains 48 articles on parenting during the middle years from the pages of TWINS™ Magazine. Educators, therapists and social workers, as well as parents who have successfully guided their twins to adulthood provide helpful advice and real-life stories.

Also included is valuable information about the discipline of twins, encouraging motivation, improving personal hygiene, handling twin birthdays, sexual curiosity, and more. **84 pages, softbound. Price: \$8.95**

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*Multiples During the Middle Years, 7-12*

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SPECIAL REPORT SPECIAL REPORT

**Splatt!** by Jane Seymour and James Keach. Emmy award winning actress Jane Seymour, star of television's "Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman," and director/actor husband James Keach create an entertaining story for young multiple children based upon their life with twin sons, John and Kris. Lady Jane is away shopping and Big Jim gives twins This One and That One permission to paint him while he takes a nap, as long as they don't get paint on themselves or the floor. And that's what they do - paint dad! For ages 4 to 8. Illustrated by Jane's former husband, Geoffrey "Jeep" Planer. **30 pages, softbound, price: \$5.99**

**I'm Having Twins** by Paris Morris. *I'm Having Twins* is an inspirational children's book about a 4-year-old girl named Paris who comes to terms with her parents adding twin siblings to their family mix. The story begins as Paris learns that she will soon have twin siblings and ends as the family leaves for the hospital to have "Her Twins". The book takes Paris through the trials and tribulations of a twin pregnancy from the big sister's perspective and shows her how they are really hers, too, easing her transition to Big Sisterhood. It is based upon the real-life experiences of a little girl named Paris living in the San Francisco Bay Area. **Softbound, Price: \$12.95**

**My Twins are Coming Home** by Paris Morris. In the second book in the series, Paris describes her experiences once her twin siblings are born, including their time in the hospital and their coming home. She shares her thoughts on visiting her twin sisters in the hospital and waiting several weeks for them to come home, why they came home at different times, and her thoughts about now sharing the attention of her family and friends with the new arrivals. **Softbound, Price: \$12.95**

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**Sketches From a Spy Tree** by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, illustrated by Andrew Glass. Anne Marie is an artist. Hiding in the branches of Jamie Hamlin's maple tree, she draws pictures of people, places and things on her street and in her neighborhood. She also writes her story as a series of linked poems providing details about herself and her family, including twin sister Mary Anne. Author Tracie Vaughn Zimmer is a twin, as is illustrator Andrew Glass. Together, they provide a vivid portrait of a year in the life of a twin. For readers age 8-12. **64 pages, hardbound, price: \$16.00**

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# Cover Photo Contest Results

## Winners



Kayla & Chelsey, 8-months-old, Denver, CO. Proud parents are Doug & Ketty Streifel. These lively and adorable identical twin girls are very happy and easy going babies! They are crawling and pulling up, and enjoy taking toys from the other and also interacting with each other!

## 1st Runner Up



Madison & Kaitlyn, 4½-years-old, Parker, CO. Proud parents are Steve & Darene Fisher. These beautiful identical twin girls are active preschoolers with a sense of humor, and they are always making their family laugh. They love hiking, swimming and doing gymnastics, and enjoy music, singing and dancing too!

## Honorable Mentions



Joel & Joshua Kenney, 5 ½ years-old, Identical boys, Sterling, CO



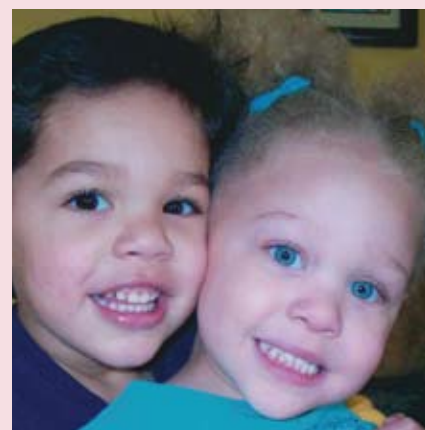
Addison & Braelyn Blakeman, 1½ -years-old, Identical girls, Centennial, CO



Sydney & Jordan Salerno-Menard, 7-months-old, Fraternal girls, Avondale, AZ



Tyler & Koby Dixon, 6-years-old, Identical boys, Highlands Ranch, CO



Kole & Kailey Johnson, 3-years-old, Fraternal boy/girl, Vancouver, WA



Harry & Maya Wise, 2-years-old, Fraternal boy/girl, Parker, CO



Tyler & Tanner Frisco, 6-weeks-old, Identical boys, Hollister, CA





Kiefer & Kole Windey-Bale, 9-months-old, Fraternal boys, Eagle, CO



Marcus & Mariah Hudiburgh, 11-months-old, Fraternal boy/girl, Centennial, CO



Cameron & Kaitlyn Falkenhagen, 18-months-old, Fraternal boy/girl, Glendale, CA



Alex & Grant Marine, 2-years-old, Fraternal boys, Parker, CO



Sydney & Sierra Goergen, 7-years-old, Identical girls, Parker, CO



Joshua, Emma & Benjamin Feldman, 4-years-old, Fraternal triplets, Denver, CO



Katie & Kayla Russell, 7-years-old, Identical girls, Arvada, CO



Taylor & Tylar Moore, 1-year-old, Identical girls, Mitchellville, IA

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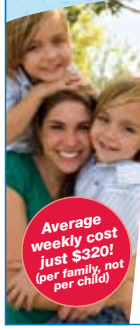


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# Double Takes

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



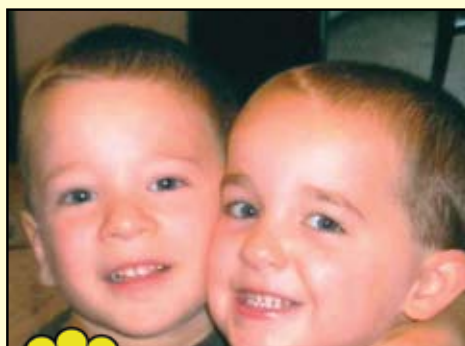
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Rocky Face, GA



4

**Nicholas & Genevieve**  
8 mos.  
Shelburne, VT



5

**Anthony & Nicholas**  
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6

**Lilly & Ella**  
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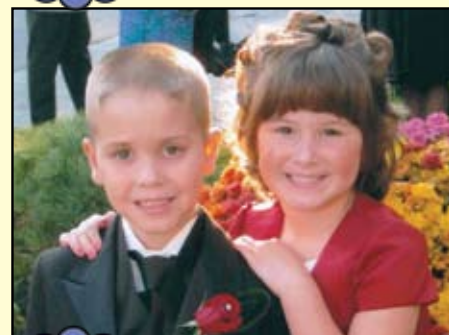
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**Ethan & Austin**  
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11

**Isabella & Ava**  
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**Brandin & Alexa**  
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16

**Chloe & Sophia**  
15 mos.  
Mansfield, OH



17

**Hailey & Ethan**  
23 mos.  
Haymarket, VA



18

**Cassie & Callie**  
7 mos.  
Minnetonka, MN



2

**Hana & Maya**  
7 yrs.  
Los Angeles, CA



3

**Tyson & Connor**  
5 yrs.  
Potomac, MD



7

**Avery & Aiden**  
4 mos.  
Garnet Valley, PA



8

**Daniel & Joshua**  
4.5 yrs.  
Howard Beach, NY



9

**Renee & Siena**  
2 yrs.  
Fort Collins, CO



13

**Garrett & Bryant**  
11 mos.  
Riverview, FL



14

**Skyla & Avery**  
3.5 yrs.  
Victoria, BC



15

**Devin & Spencer**  
6 yrs.  
Plymouth Meeting, PA



19

**Spencer & Ethan**  
1 yr.  
Mountville, PA



20

**Ashleigh & Amanda**  
15.5 yrs.  
Colorado Springs, CO

**Based on Parental Reports:**

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

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## Mailbox Continued from Page 7

Champs for two seasons), and they also played softball and volleyball. In July 2007, the girls asked me if they could give swimming a try to see if they would like it. They fell in love with the sport and have both been working very hard ever since. The twins are currently swimming with Lake Lytal Swim Club in West Palm Beach, Florida and they swam for the school on their 1A Varsity swim team as well swimming in the districts in Vero Beach, Florida. Alexys was first alternate (17th) in the 100yd butterfly while Alyssa sustained an injury that kept her out of the water for two months. Oh, and did I mention that they are only 12-years-old? I want to share our experiences with your readers so thank you for printing my letter in your magazine. *Michelle Rodriguez, Royal Palm Beach, Florida.*

## One Mom Shares Fun Activity to do with Twins

Dear Editor:

It was raining one day so we could not go out and play and one of the children made a shape that looked like a letter while playing around on the floor. I got my camera out and we did each letter of the alphabet and took a picture of each letter we made. I printed really small copies of each photo and made little books for each child and called it Rainy Days & ABC's. Someone was looking at it and said you need to put this in a family magazine so I wanted to contact TWINS™ Magazine. Our twins are now age 8 now and we also have two girls (ages 6 & 2).

I have included some photos to share so other readers can also do this fun activity with their twins. This is the letters B, O, R, S, and X. Thank you, Terri Rush ♡



## 'In The News' Continued from Page 9

**'Sex' Star Having Surrogate Twins!**—*Sex in the City* star, Sarah Jessica Parker and her actor husband Matthew Broderick are expecting twin daughters through a surrogate!

The couple, who already have a son aged six, are "overjoyed", said a statement from their publicists. The babies are due to arrive "later this summer", while no further details of the surrogate mother or her pregnancy has been revealed. Parker, 44, and 47-year-old Broderick have been married for almost 12 years. The pair are "happily anticipating the birth of their twin daughters later this summer with the generous help of a surrogate," said the statement. Parker is best known as Carrie Bradshaw, the chief character in the long-running TV comedy drama and its big screen spin-off, which was released last year. Broderick's main credits are the Broadway and film productions of *The Producers*, and the comic movie *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. ♡

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