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2010 Cutest  
Twins of the  
Year Contest

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May/June 2011

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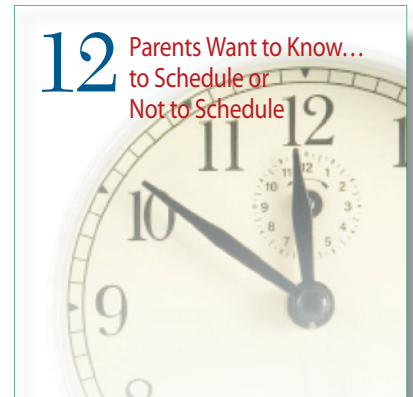
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**18** Celebrating Birthdays Twin Style

### The importance of finding the individual and discovering each child's passion

By Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

As soon as our fraternal twin boys were born we knew they were different little souls. Even as babies, one was easy-going and would display a 'happy-go-lucky' demeanor while the other would be quite upset if not on a schedule and thrived with structure. One was giggly and smiley; the other our little 'squeaky wheel'; one was messy and wasn't bothered by food all over his face; while the other guy hated to be messy and dirty; one loves to be in control while the other likes sitting back and letting others take the lead, which comes in handy for this pair. As they got older, one discovered a passion and love for singing and music; while the other guy is passionate about drawing comics and creating art. The list goes on and on... so for us, parenting twins and seeing them as different, individual people with different likes and dislikes (and certainly with different personalities) has been a fairly easy and natural process. Now at age 13 (gasp!) they each play completely different sports (one plays football and wrestles and the other plays soccer & basketball) and they enjoy separate activities, have different friends and take different courses at middle-school. In fact, most of their peers at school don't even realize they are 'twins' or even know they are brothers (ouch!)

However, for parents with identical twins, seeing each child as an individual can be much more of a challenge because not only does society see identical twins as "exactly the same" but at times it's even difficult for their parents to view their own set of twins as two, succinct individual people as well. Getting others around them to see identical twins as individuals can be even harder to accomplish. I've known some parents of identical twins that would talk to other families and give suggestions on ways to help with individuation by not calling them "the twins" but by calling each by their first names; and having others find the differences in each twin so they can get to know each child individually. This is such a wonderful way to share with others how important it is to see each of them as separate people but troubles occur when parents then turn around and complain to teachers and coaches why both twins aren't getting the same level spelling words or equal playing time or why one twin gets to start each game and the other never does...as if they are equal and should get equal treatment.

One of my twins plays for a competitive soccer club and in each age group there are three to four teams and players are placed on teams based on their skills and ability. In addition to my son who is a fraternal twin, there is a set of identical twins and another teammate that is an identical twin but his twin brother plays on a higher-level team (with separate practice & game schedules.) It certainly makes it more of a challenge for this family since they have to travel to different places to see each twin play and divide and conquer, but their twin boys are quite happy to be seen as individuals by their teammates. This family simply looks at it like they are just like every other family with siblings that plays sports on different teams. On the other hand, the set of identical twins that are both on the team sadly do not have the same skills and abilities and only one of the twins was asked to move up and play on the team and the other twin was not. Their parents responded by telling the coach that either he would need to keep both twins

on the team or they would go to another club to play. I guess it didn't matter to them that both twins did not earn a spot but rather what was important to these parents was that their twins remained together and on the team because they were twins.

Asking people in our lives to see our twins as individuals is very important but then we cannot turn around and then expect that our twins get treated equally just because they are twins, either. Being twins is a very special experience and the twinship bond is incredibly strong and should be respected. However, what message are those parents sending the twin that didn't make the team when the only reason he moved up was because his twin brother made it? How does he feel when he knows his skills aren't up to par with the other players on the team but he is there anyway? Will that make him passionate about playing soccer? Wouldn't it be good to teach him the value of earning a spot on the team because he deserves to be there and not because he just so happens to be a twin?

I wonder when these parents will finally start treating their twins as the individuals they are and allow them to grow and develop at their own pace. It's okay that they are not at the same skill level in soccer and it's also okay if one decides at one point to not even play sports at all and maybe finds that his passion is science or computers. They will never know if they don't at least try and discover the passion inside each of their sons. After all, as parents, it is our job to discover the passion in each one of our children and when parenting twins/multiples, it's even more important for us to help them each find what they truly love to do. If both of them are passionate about the same thing, that's fine, too as long as they are happy and feel like they have something they can call their own.

I know from personal experience that yes, it was much easier on our family when our twins were younger and played on the same sports teams, but as they got older they began developing different interests and became passionate about different activities and it was up to us to help them tap into these things. Now, we get to see each of our boys have their own individual experiences playing separate sports and not always being seen as "the twins" or having other kids compare their skills to one another. One of the very best ways for parents to tap into each child's passion is to spend one-on-one time with each child, separately and take the time to listen to them and help discover what it is that makes them happy and passionate in life. You may have to sign them up for numerous classes at the YMCA or city recreation department to find it but when you do, you will experience how amazing it is to see your children blossom and shine. Getting to know each of your children as the unique individuals they are and learning how they each can positively contribute to this world is one of the very best rewards you can have as a parent.

We are extremely excited to be presenting you with this March/April 2011 issue of TWINS™ Magazine, especially since in January the publication and website almost had to close down completely due to the poor economy and lack of financial resources we had for the business. Fortunately, Bill & Gina Cody, (parents of twins



*continued on page 9*



## Welcome and greetings to the TWINS Magazine community.

We are delighted to have crafted a viable plan with Christa and Aaron Reed so that TWINS Magazine can live on into the future. It is with great pride and excitement that we take the reins as publishers of the oldest twins' related publication in the USA. We have been loyal subscribers and look forward to delivering great value to our existing customers while expanding our global reach for years to come.

Let us take a minute to introduce ourselves. We are proud parents of fraternal twin girls who are rapidly approaching 4 years, a son that is soon to be 2, in addition to two adult girls from Bill's first marriage that make up our blended family. We have experienced the wonder and amazement of having twins in our lives and speak from the heart when we say that there is nothing like it! In 2006, we moved from Seattle to our hometown of Cleveland, OH after finding out that we were having twins. We wanted to be closer to aging parents and to have a better support system for caring for newborn babies. We immediately joined the TWINS Magazine community in an effort to learn more about what to expect! In fact, we were so fascinated with the experience of having twins we decided to develop an internet business that would serve as a multi feature resource. In 2008, we launched a website called MyTwinLink.com a resource for what we branded the Twinsphere. So when the opportunity to acquire TWINS Magazine presented itself, we jumped on it figuring it would be a great way to expand.

Our plans include:

- Commitment to a more sustainable "green" digital format of TWINS Magazine – 6 issues per year



- Continued distribution of the TWINS eNewsletters
- Improved TWINS Message Board with new software upgrades, improved categories, and better security
- An Annual Commemorative TWINS Magazine edition in print - a compilation of the year's digital content available for pre-order for those who wish to own a printed volume for their bookshelves!
- Expanded marketplace and shopping features
- Revitalizing various resource guides for hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices and professionals - introducing families of multiples to our invaluable magazine.

We see many opportunities to grow the circulation of our magazine even in the climate of distressed magazines. We are

confident that the mix of digital and print volumes will be advantageous for all. We welcome your valuable comments and suggestions as we embark on this publishing adventure and wish to thank everyone for years of support and patronage - we look forward to carrying on the legacy of TWINS Magazine.

Cheers –  
Bill and Gina Cody

**LIFE IS A TEST. . . AN IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE NEW PUBLISHERS OF TWINS MAGAZINE**

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# TWINS™

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## Looking for new and fun twin birthday party ideas?

(New York, New York) The Agrawal sisters, twins Miki and Radha, from New York City own an organic pizzeria called "Slice, the perfect food" ([www.sliceperfect.com](http://www.sliceperfect.com)).



Miki Agrawal, founder, and her twin sister, Radha, have new kids party/get-together ideas (make your own (healthy) pizza party [www.healthypizzakit.com](http://www.healthypizzakit.com), or a pizza and movie afternoon-where they play a Pixar movie on the big screen and the kids get popcorn, pizza and a juice. They also have a great fundraiser idea for parents and kids to raise money using their healthy and fun "pizza kits".



Take a look at their video they created explaining their kids' parties: <http://sliceperfect.tumblr.com/post/2831197534/my-favorite-kids-programs-at-slice>.

Miki's twin sister, Radha Agrawal also owns a company that introduces a fun way for kids to eat veggies called Super Sprowtz! [www.supersprowtz.com](http://www.supersprowtz.com). These twins have created a unique and wonderful way of introducing healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime!

## Dr. Joan A. Friedman Leads a Preliminary Discussion on Findings of her in-depth Adult Twin Survey

(Santa Monica, California) Joan A. Friedman, Ph.D. (a twin herself and mother of twins and the author of the book *Emotionally Healthy Twins*) recently conducted an

adult twin survey where more than 250 people participated, from ages 18 to 85, and she continues to receive responses every day. "I was surprised by some findings and validated by others. More than ever, I am convinced about my newest book's relevance since so many twin pairs are hungry for information and advice concerning their relationship to their twin," says Dr. Friedman. She goes on to say, "The majority of respondents were very motivated to understand the aspects of their twin relationship that contribute to feelings of sadness, confusion, and fear. While a small percentage of people were incredulous that being a twin would have any unpleasant or negative consequences, most authentically acknowledged difficulties and desired help in resolving them. Many twin pairs are attempting to work out their issues so that the twinship can maintain its integrity alongside other primary relationships."

She was not surprised by the fact that there were only a handful of respondents who expressed unmitigated resentment and estrangement from their twin. "The few who did so described years of legitimate frustration and angst. 'The segment where I appeared on the Rachel Ray Show entitled "I Hate My Twin" a few years ago was an exaggerated and sensationalized ploy geared to generate audience ratings and publicity.' Like so many survey respondents, the young women on this show were struggling to understand and rework their issues with separation and individuation." Joan adds, "Presently both are doing well – living in separate cities, pursuing different career paths, and appreciating their cherished connection." Joan truly believes that it is imperative that non-twins along with our society-at-large recognize that twins, just like singletons, have expectable developmental struggles with their siblings. "Conflict does not signal that they hate each other nor insinuate that they are no longer close. Twins' yearnings to forge other intimate relationships without alienating or hurting their twin emerge as the salient struggle."

She also read many poignant stories shared by twins who describe how their powerful connection to their twin helped them survive traumatic events such as the

death of a loved one, divorce, and illness. The multiple references to fear about twin loss reflect the love and devotion that many twins feel for each other. Also, the diverse parenting styles reported by twin pairs were intriguing to Joan and she will be keeping us posted when her book about adult twins is available.

## Parents Create Line of Maternity Clothes Exclusively for Moms of Twins & Multiples, Filling Void in the Maternity Market

(Atlanta, GA) – Two parents have launched For Multiples Maternity [www.ForMultiples.com](http://www.ForMultiples.com), a maternity clothing line for mothers of twins and multiples, following their struggle to find fitting maternity clothes during two sets of twin pregnancies. The company's clothing answers a need in the market for specialty maternity sizes and shapes. For Multiples Maternity includes designer dresses, tunics and pants that are produced in Atlanta, Georgia using American-made materials. The line comprises fashionable casual clothes, as well as professional office attire, that can accommodate an expanding belly without upsizing the entire garment. Though specialty made, For Multiple Maternity's clothing is competitively priced. Pants retail around \$64 and tunics around \$89. "When my wife was pregnant with our first set of twins, it was disheartening to see her so upset about how she looked due to ill-fitting maternity clothes during a time when I thought she looked the most beautiful and should proudly be able to show off her growing belly. Only extra-large maternity





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clothes would fit her in the stomach, but then they would hang on her like a tent elsewhere because they weren't designed specifically for moms of multiples," said Jim Fitzgibbon, co-founder of For Multiples Maternity. "She still ran into many of the same clothing problems five years later when she was pregnant with our second set of twins, so we knew that there was an opportunity to help other pregnant moms of multiples feel stylish and be comfortable at the same time. After researching the specific needs of moms of multiples and working with known designers to create well-made custom clothes, we are proud to launch For Multiples Maternity." To learn more about For Multiples Maternity, view items or order clothes, visit [www.ForMultiples.com](http://www.ForMultiples.com).

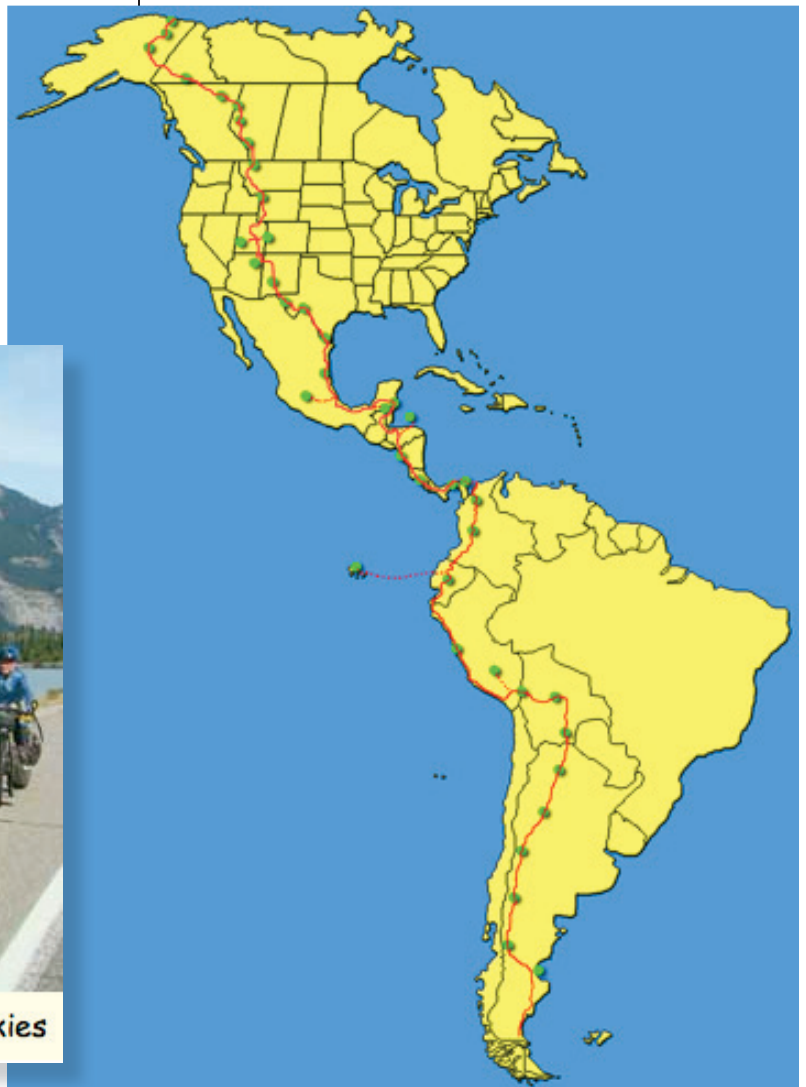
## End of an amazing journey— Family on Bikes: Vogel Twins & Parents End Three Year Journey and Earn a Place in the Guinness Book of World Records!

We can't believe it's already been nearly three years when TWINS™ Magazine featured this adventurous family back in 2008 when they left on their journey and are amazed they are still traveling on their bikes. Congratulations to the Vogel family of Boise, Idaho as they near the end of their epic quest. The Vogels – John (56), Nancy (50), and twin boys Davy (13), and Daryl (13) left Prudhoe Bay, Alaska in June 2008 to cycle to the southern end of the Americas. The family is now a mere 500 miles from Ushuaia, the southernmost town of the world,



Climbing the Canadian Rockies

and expects to reach their destination in mid-March. To date, the Vogels have pedaled 17,000 miles through fourteen countries. They've crossed North America, Central America, and South America in the 33 months since they left the north shore of Alaska. The twin brothers, Davy and Daryl, will have earned a place in the



Nancy rides along the Canadian Rockies



Guinness Book of World Records as the youngest people to cycle the length of the Americas when they reach their goal next month. The current record holder was 18-years-old when he arrived in Ushuaia. The adventurous family travels on three bikes, including one tandem for John and Daryl, and carries everything they need on their bikes. Lashed on to their bikes are tents, sleeping bags, a stove and pot, clothes for all seasons, spare parts and tools, and home-schooling materials for the boys. More information is available at [www.familyonbikes.org](http://www.familyonbikes.org).



Daryl & David watching ship pass through the locks on the Panama Canal

*Editor's letter Continued from page 4*

plus a singleton) owners of the popular twin website MyTwin-Link.com came to the rescue to keep TWINS™ Magazine and TwinsMagazine.com available for all of you to continue to enjoy for many years to come! With this issue, they are the new Publishers/Owners of TWINS™ Magazine and TwinsMagazine.com and they have the resources, experience and enthusiasm to take the magazine and website to the next level and beyond and we are so thrilled. I am extremely honored that they have asked me to stay on as interim Editor-in-Chief of TWINS™ Magazine and I'm excited to work with such a dynamic and innovative company so we can continue bringing you parenting content you cannot find anywhere else on this planet! Thank you all for your continued support for this parenting resource for twins/multiples since 1984. It's been an amazing, wonderful experience and I look forward to an even better 2011 for TWINS™ Magazine and TwinsMagazine.com. Happy spring everyone it's time to start new!

Sincerely,

*Christa D Reed*

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

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



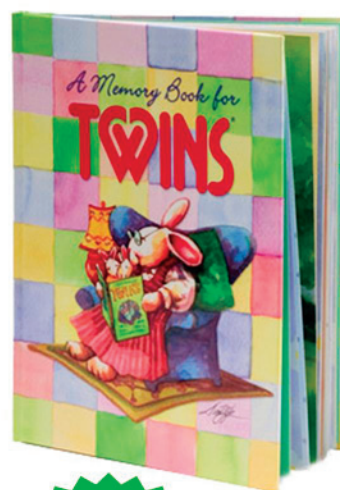
Send us your comments, suggestions, questions about raising multiples or if you need advice on a pressing subject or any other information you want to share with us and your letter/email may be included in an upcoming

issue of TWINS™ Magazine. You can also send along a photo of you and your twins/multiples with your email.

Contact Christa D. Reed,  
Editor-in-Chief at  
[twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com](mailto:twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com).

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# SENTENCED TO BED REST

by Faye Licari

My doctor first planted the notion of bed rest in my mind shortly after he diagnosed me with TTTS (Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome.) I flinched at first, but then considered all the things I could accomplish: I could finally order our wedding album (it's only been six years since we tied the knot); I could finally load our backlog of family images on Shutterfly; I could finally read all the books that my childless friends had been telling me about. As a working mother, my "to do" list had turned into a "to do" novel, and bed rest, I thought, would afford me an opportunity to tackle all of the tasks I'd always wanted to tackle but didn't have time for. Secretly I suppose I hoped my doctor would determine that bed rest was a necessary course of treatment for me.

But then it happened. At week 23, two days after the new school year started, my doctor did a cervical measurement and stated that in one week's time my cervix, which had been very cooperative up until that warm August day, had shortened from 35 to 25. "The only thing that has changed this week

is that you've started teaching again," he said. I agreed but added that I'd been sitting down as much as possible during the introductory days of classes. I only moved around to pass out papers, walk down to the copy machine, run down the hall to the printer and attend various meetings in rooms around the building. "Oh, that's all?" my doctor joked. I knew I was busted. The fact is that teaching is one of the worst careers for a mom in danger of pre-term labor. I had to stop working, immediately. Suddenly bed rest felt more like a sentence handed down than a luxurious opportunity to play a little life catch-up.

I spent the first week of bed rest on our couch. I read two books and caught up on lots of phone calls. At the end of the week I found that resting had paid off as the cervical pressure had subsided. Since I was feeling better, I decided there would be no harm in doing some small projects around the house. That next week I undertook more physical tasks such as catching up on the laundry that had started to pile up and cleaning out cabinets that had become overridden with useless clutter. I rested occasionally but in hindsight I certainly moved around a lot more than a woman on bed rest with TTTS and cervical shortening should have.



My doctor's appointment the next week proved that my definition of bed rest and the medical definition of bed rest were polar opposites. The cervical pressure had returned and serious cramping had set in. My doctor did a cervical measurement and found that I had shortened again, down to 20. He also put me on a monitor and discovered that I was contracting regularly every 3-5 minutes.

Pre-term labor was not the only obstacle that presented itself that week. The TTTS had caused an influx of fluid in my bigger baby's amniotic sac as well as a slight decrease in the already dangerously low amount of fluid in my smaller baby's amniotic sac. My doctor prescribed Indocin to calm my uterus and scheduled an amnioreduction for later that week. He determined that the increased fluid in the bigger baby had contributed to the pre-term labor but in my guilt-ridden conscience, the babies were in danger because of my increased activity.

That night I lay in bed and cried. I cried for my babies. I cried for my careless choice to view bed rest as anything less than a serious medical course of treatment. There was a strong possibility that the amnioreduction coupled with my contracting uterus could result in premature delivery, meaning my babies might be born at 24 weeks, barely viable, barely ready for life outside of my womb.

The morning of the amnioreduction my doctor walked in with a smile on his face and a calm that they can't teach you to fake in medical school. My favorite nurse was there to assist with the procedure and she held one hand while my husband held the other. After removing two liters of fluid my doctor determined that the procedure was complete for the time being, though future reductions would likely be necessary.

I went home that afternoon feeling exhausted. I climbed into bed and allowed my body to nestle into the contours of my mattress. I positioned myself so that my belly was supported by a large pillow. I closed my eyes and let the notion of conquering my "to do" novel fade into sweet dreams of two healthy baby boys. Nothing was more important than resting. Nothing was more important than my babies.

It has been nine weeks since I was first "sentenced" to bed rest. I have had some setbacks especially now that my due date is drawing closer and the natural urge to nest is rising. Luckily, however, my strong inner voice reminds me how scared I was at the prospect of my twins being born before their time, and instead of tempting fate by getting up, I find a more comfortable way to lay in my bed.

I fill my days with bed-friendly activities such as reading and using my laptop to catch up with friends via e-mail and Facebook. At night my son brings books to my room and we read together or talk about his day. He's only three but he's very protective of his baby brothers. When I get up to go to the bathroom or stretch my legs, my son looks at me and says, "Momma, you're supposed to be in bed!" I smile at him and think how lucky I am that soon there will be two more little voices to fill my heart and home with the sweetness that only children can bring. ♥



**Faye Licari** is a teacher and photographer. She and her husband currently live in Illinois with their three year-old son, Leonardo. They were due to have their twins this past December.

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INFANT

# Parents Want to Know

## To schedule or not to schedule?

by Adam P Matheny, Jr

Should infant twins be put or kept on a schedule? A number of parents over the years have begged for an answer to this age-old question. But, like so many questions concerning infants, especially twin infants, a definitive answer is not at hand.

Indeed, the answer to this question about scheduling has changed several times throughout the century, reflecting changes in theories of child care. During the 1930s, parents were told that the infant was so fragile that extreme protection was needed. Proper infant care, therefore, like hospital care of that time, consisted of strict sleeping, feeding and daily routines. Thumb-sucking, demand feeding, fretful and irregular sleep patterns, and crying bouts were symptomatic of an infant already developing bad habits or of inept or lazy parents. Good parents keep the regimen.

From the 1940s to today, experts have urged parents to take a more relaxed approach. Some experts have even gone so far as to suggest that the infant, by nature, is capable of developing a personal, therefore appropriate, pattern of daily life. For these experts, feeding and sleeping schedules, systematic weaning and toilet training practices are out; otherwise, parents are developing the roots of problems to be seen later.

### KEEPING FLEXIBLE

But these experts, once quite numerous, have given way to the present mainstream of thought that a flexible approach, neither extremely strict nor extremely permissive, is better. Nevertheless, the debate continues, and one senses that infant scheduling has more opponents than supporters.

Before considering the merits of each position, we have to consider what parents mean by an infant's schedule. For most parents, an infant has a schedule if he sleeps, eats and plays at predictable times and for regular lengths of time. Attempts to put and keep an infant on a schedule are prompted by a desire to develop a predictable infant pattern around which family life can be organized. While some parents confess that



the reorganization of family life is a temporary challenge, the long-term psychological advantage comes from the fact that predictable infants give parents a sense of competent control.

Other parents consider an infant's schedule in terms of how well it fits the pre-existing rhythm of the family. These parents try to schedule infants so that feeding and sleeping match habit patterns of others. Predictability by itself doesn't go far enough, unless it corresponds to the predictability of all.

Another, and much smaller, set of parents has no sense of scheduling an infant because their families have no routines. Typically, these are larger families in which each member comes and goes, eats and sleeps according to individual needs. Whether or not infants have or will keep schedules in such families may go unrecognized.

### THE FIRST PRIORITY

In reality, however, an individual infant's schedule is not malleable to any or all of the family situations described above. During the first months of life, an infant's routines take first priority, because of the urgent needs of growth, including eating and sleeping. No matter how parents design their family life, the infant makes the primary sketch.

In addition, during early and later infancy, infants' biological routines vary according to each infant's own individual temperament that may help or hinder developing a schedule. For example, infants who are more emotionally positive, more sociable, and more easily adaptable to changes in routines, are found to be more predictable and more easily kept on schedules.

These "easy" infants can be put and kept on schedules sooner and with less effort and upset. By contrast, "difficult" infants present a greater challenge, so much so that for extreme cases, sleeping and feeding routines are not firmly established until later childhood. These variations of infant temperament may match some families' daily rhythms and not others. As some research has shown, it is the match or mismatch between infant and family that is associated with parental ease or discomfort with their infants.

Adam P. Matheny, Jr. Ph.D., is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He was also the director of the director of The Louisville Twin Study.



## IN THE CASE OF MULTIPLES...

Twin infants complicate these matters considerably. Despite conventional wisdom, even identical twin infants are not exactly alike in all respects. Identical and fraternal twins can differ in terms of their prevailing mood, sociability and adaptability, as well as their sleep requirements, eating habits, periods of playfulness, and other routines.

Research from previous national twin studies like the Louisville Twin Study, showed that one-third to one-half of all infant twin pairs differ for one or more of these characteristics. Although identical twins tend to be more alike than fraternal twins, many identical twin pairs differ enough so that parents see one twin as being more adaptable to family routines than the other.

The greatest challenges for parents of twins are the infant pairs in which both infants are unpredictable, or in which both infants are predictable but on different daily

patterns. Parents of these twin pairs are, in effect, on call all the time. Many expressed symptoms of extreme stress and in families with a single parent; the custodial parent often shows signs of depression.

Because most families with infant twins are not ongoing participants in a twin project, parents may not have the external means to evaluate infant twins' adaptability in terms of a particular family's routines. In the view of this, parents should try to establish a schedule for infant twins and keep the twins on that schedule.

In the book *Multiple Blessings*, Betty Rothbart provides a strong case for this approach by quoting one father who said, "Discipline is sanity." In the book *The Care of Twin Children*, authors Rosemary Theroux and Josephine Tingley also provide some practical suggestions about synchronizing the eating and sleeping schedule of twins. The authors, both nurses, suggest, for example, that one twin can be awakened to feed at approximately the same time as her co-twin. By this approach, both twins may be brought into the same schedule.

One drawback of trying to put and keep twins on a schedule can be found in excesses the rigid approach led to in the early part of this century. A schedule (and discipline) taken to the extreme can be abusive. Moreover, if a schedule doesn't work for some twins, parents may consider it a personal failure. Especially in these instances, parents should seek help from a good daycare center, relatives and friends for respite.

Another possible drawback to putting twins on the same schedule is the possibility of suppressing twin individuality. While there is no evidence that similar schedules for twins or children in the same household lead to a loss of individuality, speculations about these effects remain. From a practical perspective, however, the immediately obvious advantages of schedules seem to outweigh the uncertain disadvantages suspected to appear in later life.

In short, if a family has a need for rest, organization and a sense of being in control, they should try to put twin infants on the same schedule—and keep them there. ♥

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# 6 Steps to Potty Training Your Pair

by Mary Billiter Thomas

Potty training... Now or later? My husband and I agreed to delay answering that dreaded question until we heard from the experts. Marriage and family therapist Nonie Bradley and certified parent educator Sherry Ittner, parents themselves, team-teach parenting classes in Southern California, including one on potty training, which they break down into six helpful steps. And with potty training, as with much in the lives of twins, it's two steps forward and one step back.

**Mary Billiter Thomas** lives in Oceanside, California with her husband and identical twin boys.

## 1 Readiness

Each child is unique in this process. "A key element," Ittner says, "is bladder control: Is your child having longer intervals between diaper changes?" Typically, girls show readiness

between the ages of 2 and 2 ½ and boys by the age of 3. That was the experience for Diane Aiken, of Encinitas, California, mother of boy/girl twins. "My daughter had bladder control right away," Aiken says, "But my son is taking a little longer." While the readiness of your child is primary, parental readiness should not be overlooked. Aiken agrees, "One morning I woke up and decided I was ready to start the potty training process and we began."

Bradley stressed the importance to parents of "owning their feelings" towards potty training because children are highly intuitive and often reflect their parents' feelings. "Get real clear on your attitudes before starting the next step, preparing," Bradley cautions.

## 2 Preparing

The preparing stage can start as early as 18-months because you are simply introducing the idea of using a potty. Shop around and purchase a potty but, as Ittner suggests, "Introduce the potty gradually by letting your child

explore. Ask them if they want to sit on the potty, but if they say 'no', quit. You and your child are still becoming comfortable with the idea and preparing for the next phase.

"At 18-months, a child learns through observation and imitating others, so parents and siblings are encouraged to model the behavior," Ittner explains.

"Blake and Brent were much more interested in standing and going potty like their big brother than using the smaller potty," says Shawn Homan, mother of fraternal twin boys in Oceanside, California.

Twins can also model behavior for each other. They see their twin use the potty and don't want to be left out, so they try, too. "The time involved in potty training twins," Homan admits, "wasn't cut in half, but it was much easier."

## 3 Step By Step

Even after preparing the groundwork, parents tend to fall into the trap of questioning their children. "Do you want to stop wearing diapers?" Instead, Joanna Cole, in her book *Parents Book of Toilet Teaching*, advocates making positive statements such as, "We think you are ready to stop wearing diapers and start using the potty."

As with preparing your children and letting them explore the potty, underpants should also be gradually introduced. It is important not to rush the process. Set a date with your children and make positive statements. Tell them: "We are going to go shopping for some new underpants."

## Signs that your twins are ready...

\*\*from the American Academy of Pediatrics

- ✓ Your twins stay dry at least two hours at a stretch or are dry after a nap.
- ✓ Bowel movements are regular and predictable.
- ✓ Facial expressions offer clues.
- ✓ Your twins can follow simple instructions.
- ✓ Your twins can help undress themselves.
- ✓ Your twins are uncomfortable with dirty or wet diapers.
- ✓ Your twins ask to sue the potty or wear underpants.





"Include your child," Cole recommends. "Let them select their underpants." Also, be sure to buy underpants that are big enough to pull up and down easily. Your twins will need about a dozen pairs each—in preparation for accidents.

After your twins select their underpants, don't hide the new pants in a drawer. Let your twins admire themselves in the mirror with their new underpants.



Kelly O'Connell of Seal Beach, California, recalls: "It was a big deal going to buy big boy underpants and big girl panties for my triplets." O'Connell laughs as she recalls, "The excitement didn't end at the store—they showed them off to everyone!"

Next, lead them to the potty. Use a positive statement, such as "Remember, you're not wearing diapers now, so you'll have to use the potty."

As we discussed, however, you can lead a child to the potty but you can't make him go. Bradley recommends that parents relax and not panic.

Be ready for accidents and remind your child of the potty for the "next time."

## 4 Night Dryness

"Night dryness" develops later in most children because they are still working on control during the day. Until your child has fewer daytime accidents and has developed greater bladder control, use a diaper for naptime and during the night.

Eventually, when your child is ready for a diaper-free night, prepare yourself. Double-sheet the bed, avoid any drinks for your child one hour prior to bedtime and leave the potty in an accessible area.

### TWINS ARE DIFFERENT...

We have 4-year-old identical twin girls, Alexandra (Sasha) and Anelise. Sometimes Alexandra will wake during the night with the call of nature but not be quite awake enough to answer the call. One night about 3:00 AM in the morning, I awoke to the sound of a weak whining from their bedroom and got up to investigate. To my surprise, Alexandra was fast asleep and Anelise was sitting up in her bed. I asked her what was wrong. She pointed at her sister and said, "Sasha has to go to the bathroom!" She then lay down, pulled her covers up and went back to sleep. I went over to the sleeping Sasha, picked her up and took her to the bathroom, where she answered the call that her sister heard. Yes, twins are different.

—Submitted by Billy and Debbie Ramsay, Plymouth, Mass

*Continued on page 25*

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# Hiding from “The Bogeyman”

by Patricia Edmister, Ph.D.

Pat and Jim Jones had always been very pleased that their twins, Jill and Tommy, so readily complied with the well-structured bedtime routine that they had established. Thus, they were very surprised when first Tommy, then Jill, became very reluctant to “finish” the routine with the turning out of the lights in their bedroom. What Pat and Jim discovered was that seemingly overnight, the twins, now 3-years-old, had developed a fear of the dark.

**Patricia Edmister, Ph.D.**, of Sherman Oaks, California is the director of developmental psychology and children’s study at the California Family Study Center and is the mother of fraternal twins.

## WHAT CAUSES FEAR OF THE DARK?

Many theories have been proposed about what causes such fears in young children, but the most widely accepted one claim that at about three years of age, children’s memories and imaginations are reaching a new developmental stage. Prior to this stage, children will usually only react with fear to some-



## HELPFUL “DON’TS”

- Don’t threaten your children with the bogeyman or other things that might “get them” if they misbehave. You’ll be creating your own monster.
- Don’t tell your children not to be afraid, and don’t make fun of them for expressing fear. They can’t help themselves.
- Don’t allow viewing of scary movies or TV, especially before bedtime.
- Don’t compare your twins to each other when one seems fearless and the other fearful—it can only hurt the self-esteem of the fearful child and it can establish the unrealistic and unhealthy expectation that both twins will experience life identically.



thing scary going on in their immediate environment and at the moment it occurs.

When they progress to this new stage, their improved memory, more advanced imaginary abilities and increasingly complex thinking processes make it possible for them to remember or enhance situations long after the original cause of the fear has disappeared. Fear of the dark seems to occur when children's increasing abilities allow them to mentally store away scary thoughts until they come back to mind in the quiet and darkness of their bedrooms.

In many cases, the youngsters seem unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, due in large part to their being in a developmental stage in which they have incomplete insight; they find something like a large shadow on the wall or a strange sound outside their window scary, and they can't imagine a more realistic interpretation of the frightening sight or sound.

## WHY DO SOME CHILDREN REACT MORE INTENSELY THAN OTHERS?

Some children seem to be more sensitive to scary things than others. While all young children seem to go through periods where they are afraid of something—strangers, the toilet flushing, being sucked down the bathroom drain, large animals—some children respond with only mild expressions of concern while others experience full-blown bouts of terror.

Parents of twins may observe these varying degrees of fearfulness in their children's responses to fear-provoking situations, when one child reacts much more intensely than his co-twin. Often twins exhibit a sort of "copy-cat" phenomenon, where one twin will struggle to learn a new skill and the other, after observing his co-twin's struggle, then seems to grasp the skill with little or no trial and error time needed himself.

With fears, twins exhibit a similar phenomenon. While one child may experience a fear intensely, the other is much calmer, almost as if the hysteria or fearfulness of the one alleviates the tension of the other.

Research has shown, that in some cases, the way children have been treated by others seems to make a significant difference in their fearfulness. For example, some

studies have found that children who sleep with their parents in the same room or bed are more likely to experience excessive fears. Other research has shown that children, who are exposed to parents' fighting, whether with words or blows, are more fearful, especially if the fighting seems to be about the children or their care.

Interestingly, research has also found that children who are not disciplined or whose lives are not structured by guidelines and limits experience more fears. Two other strong factors contributing to both general fears and specifically fear of the dark are parents who themselves are afraid of the dark and model that behavior for their children, and scary programs on television. In regard to TV, it is important to recognize that children may not appear to be frightened at the time of viewing or be able to verbalize that what they are seeing is not actually real. However, they may later react fearfully in the solitude and darkness of their bedroom; conjuring up the monsters and creatures of the program or DVD.

Sometimes children take their fear of the dark beyond the bedroom. They may be afraid to go upstairs once darkness has fallen, or be afraid to go into a darkened house without a parent. In most cases, this can be traced to fears generated by watching movies or other TV programs with violent content. In some cases, evening news broadcasts generate such fears, especially for children living in large cities with reports of nighttime urban violence.

Although most children outgrow bedtime-related fears by the age of four or five, some parents may find that their child has not, or that the intensity of the fear, the number of fears, or the frequency of associ-

ated behaviors such as nightmares seems to be extreme. If so, they may want to discuss their concerns with a mental health professional or their children's pediatrician. ♥

## HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

- The first thing you can do to help your children through his stage is to remain calm, patient and reassuring. Realizing that this is a very normal stage of development will help you control your own anxiety—which will only contribute to your children's fear.
- Give plenty of hugs and affection and let your children know you'll come back if they need some extra reassurance. Be careful, however, that this doesn't turn into manipulative nighttime behavior aimed at postponing bedtime.
- Use a night light and/or leave the door open so that shadows don't seem so scary and the children don't feel so isolated.
- Check out the room to allay your children's fears. Look in the closet and under the beds with the children before they get into bed so that they know there is nothing there that shouldn't be.
- Monitor news programs by watching them with your children so that frightening events can be discussed and put in proper context.

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# Celebrating Birthdays

## Twin Style

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof



As parents of twins, we all go the extra mile to give our multiples a sense of individuality. From spending time alone with each child to driving them to a different after-school activity, we're conscientious about allowing them their own experiences and a chance to shine sans co-twin. Yet try as we might, there's one thing that all twins and triplets have to share, and that's their birthday. But they don't have to share the limelight, do they?

### TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

Admittedly, one of the advantages of having two or more kids born on the same day is a bigger bang for your party-planning buck. Just ask Jenn Duke of High Point, NC. Her five-year-old identical twin sons, Camron and Caden are born two days shy of older brother Jaxon. Since Duke can combine all three celebrations into one day, her children's parties are big events. "One year we had pony rides at our house; another we had the Creature Teacher who brought cool animals for guests to touch," she explains. If her three kids had been born months apart, she couldn't have afforded such extravagances.

Jenny Davies took a similar approach when her fraternal twin sons, Taylor and Tyler, now 19-years-old, were young. "I used to order a bouncer for the entire day," she recalls. This El Segundo, CA mom not only had a money-saving plan but stamina, too—she'd have a birthday party in the morning for her boys and then another in the afternoon for her older daughter, Tracy. "I thought I'd better get my money's worth!" she laughs.

Some venues may even cut you a discount for reserving their location two days in a row allowing you to have back-to-back parties. (Talk about a long weekend!) Once Sue Stanton's 10-year-old girl-boy twins, Amanda and Evan, hit the school years, it was obvious that two parties were their new reality. "They wanted their own celebrations with their own friends," explains this Sarasota, FL mom. "To make it easier on myself, I booked the same venue but kept the boys and girls separate with separate cakes."

But soon Stanton found that the boys and girls couldn't mingle easily at the same party so two years ago she took the plunge and planned two parties on two separate days. She's never looked back. "I do one party on Saturday and one on Sunday, and they each get to choose their own friends and venue," she says. "It's

worked out great. It's nice that we can focus on one child at a time, and they can each choose what they want to do without having to compromise on this one day."

### MIXING IT UP

Don't have the fortitude for a two-day birthday-party marathon? Then do as Ann Wieczkowski and instead try two complementing themes within the same party. "One daughter is a Tom boy while the other is not," explains this Bordentown, NJ mom of 11-year-old identical twin girls, Chloe and Sydney. To compensate for their stylistic differences, Wieczkowski combines two different ideas that are related to one another. For instance, one year she threw a mermaid-pirate party. "We had a treasure hunt and gave the kids a pirate map wrapped around fake jewels and eye patches. For the mermaid theme we did sand art and had inflatable pools all around with plastic fish," she says. "It was one party but they each showed their individuality by picking a craft or game that went with their theme."

Randi Kulis of Sandpoint, ID loves the hodgepodge approach. "Because of their different interests, we may have a car piñata, plates and cups for Spencer's side of things and Lego balloons and Lego plates for Parker," she says of her eight-year-old identical twin sons. "Generally, we work together to come up with games they both like or they compromise. They each have their own 'guest' list, which further helps with keeping the party more their own. Although there's no separation at the party, each boy has a sense of 'self' at the celebration; it just looks a little eclectic."

### THE GIFT DILEMMA

Even in this day and age of multiple multiples, some party guests will show up with one gift for both twins to share. So should you, the hostess, try to prevent this little faux pas by politely encouraging guests to bring two gifts?

Most moms agree that reminding family members is acceptable. For instance, when Deanna Nelson's parents wanted to give her five-year-old identical twin sons, Alexander and Christopher, one Nintendo DS to share, this St. Cloud, MN mom politely told them either buy two or buy none. "They were thinking of the expense of





two Nintendos while I was thinking of the fighting that would ensue every time the boys wanted to play," she says. (Her parents ended up buying two.)

But family aside, is it appropriate to convey the same message to your friends and your children's classmates? Although all children should be taught proper manners and to graciously thank their guests for any gifts, even if it's a shared gift, there are ways to discreetly drop "a hint" to those who continue the practice. "If someone or a few people became known for giving one gift, I might try sending out two invitations to one party, one from each twin," explains Lauren Favetti of Bloomfield, NJ. "Hopefully they will get the hint that although there is one event, it really is two parties logistically combined."

But hey! Why not do away with gifts altogether? That's what mom Amanda Sebra of Exton, PA does with her seven-year-old fraternal twin girls, Samantha and Savannah. "Since my daughters always ask for donations of items to a different charity each year, gifts haven't been an issue," she says. One year her girls collected more than 100 pairs of shoes for a local orphanage; another time they collected canned goods for a food bank. To keep it fun, Sebra matches the donation to the party's theme. For instance, for her girls' Angelina Ballerina party, they collected dance clothes and gently-used dance shoes for a free dance program at the Salvation Army in New York City. "I'm happy that they haven't missed receiving gifts from friends, but I do look forward to the day that they take an interest in the charities and perhaps choose one themselves that they want to get involved with."

Catherine Grace's eight-year-old fraternal twin boys are gift-free as well. "The idea of a 'no gift birthday party' was discussed at a parenting group meeting when my kids were three years old," says the Glen Ridge, NJ mom. "It resonated. It made sense. We haven't looked back since."

Both moms are quick to point out that their children are no different than anyone else's. "The boys grumbled a bit," says Grace of her eight-year-old fraternal twins, George and Max. "But in truth with all of the presents from family and god-parents, there is no shortage of stuff in their lives."

## LET THEM EAT CAKE

When it comes to celebrating your multiples' birthdays, the two-versus-one-cake

debate and whether you should sing Happy Birthday once or twice draws a lot of discussion among moms of twins as well. It ranks right up there with the national debate on health care reform with every mom having a strong opinion!

"For their first birthday, I did cupcakes, so each baby had his and her own," says Sharon Mandrano of High Point, NC of her nine-year-old fraternal triplets, Tressa, Gabrielle, and Nicholas. During her twins' early years, Lora Kaprowski of Westfield, MA kept her parties simple, too, by decorating half a sheet cake for James and the other half for co-twin Juliana.

No-fuss celebration during the first few years is a great idea as most twins and triplets won't remember the day but around their third birthday, it's worth the effort to surprise each of your twins with their very own cake. It's a tradition that Amanda Nethero, editor of the blog, Multiples and More, is adamant about—she's given each of her two-year-old girl-boy twins, Jillian and Aaron, a cake of their own from the get-go. "This is really important to me because my brother and I are born a day apart and I hated having to share a cake with him growing up," she explains. "And I'm pretty sure he felt the same way when he was in high school and had to have a Snow White cake for his birthday."

And what about singing Happy Birthday twice? Does it really make a difference by positively contributing to your twins' sense of self? Probably not but it's such an easy tradition to follow why wouldn't you? Cathleen Mallon Sita sums it up best. "I think the sweetest thing is the look on both of the boys' faces when we sing to each of them individually," says the Paoli, PA mother to seven-year-old identical twins, Charlie and Luke. "For so much of their lives they are talked about as 'the twins' or 'the boys,' even though everyone makes it a point to treat them as individuals. I just love to see their faces when each is singing to his brother and being sung to individually. It's priceless!" ♥

*Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 14-year-old fraternal twin boys and a 11-year-old singleton. She's also the author 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).*



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# We're Having Twins!

## *Helping Singletons Understand the Arrival of Two New Babies*

by Susan R. Cohen, M.D.

I was the happy mother of a nearly 2-year-old boy when we were told that I was carrying twins. My initial reaction was panic, even though, as a mother and pediatrician, I'd had a fairly extensive education to prepare me for the experience. My thoughts quickly raced from the practical, "How will I fit them all in my car?" and "How will I ever have everyone ready in the morning so I can get to work on time?" to the emotional, "What will this mean to Adam?"

Our son, Adam, a bright and personable little boy, was the center of our busy household. He easily answered such questions as "Who is the best boy?" ("Me!") And had the high self esteem that comes with being the one and only. He knew soon enough that something was

happening to disrupt our household—Mommy was often sick and had to go to the doctor. Mommy didn't chase him around quite as often as she used to. He responded to this in stride, giving me kisses and empathetic hugs, watching my belly expand.

### OUR GROWING FAMILY

Adam's education began to incorporate his future siblings. He learned the concept of two fairly quickly. He could count two cribs in the nursery, two swings that appeared in our den, two homecoming outfits purchased ahead of time. He recited with pride that the neighborhood kids had mommies with one baby in their bellies, while his mother had two. He learned the concepts of big and little while comparing his old baby socks that I sorted through to his current "big boy" pairs. He clearly knew his colors, able to tell me which of the new outfits were to be his (blue) vs. his forthcoming sisters' (pink). Adam was prepared for Daddy doing more and more with the use of five plastic toy elephants. During bathtub play, the "daddy" elephant got lunch for the "big boy" elephant while the "mommy" elephant rested and waited for the two baby elephants to come play. We played out what life might be like with a larger family, using our 2-year-old's favorite stuffed animals. We became keenly aware of and pointed out references to twins in our household. Bambi has twins at the end of our abridged Disney book and a bear has stork-delivered twins in the beginning of Dumbo. Adam didn't know how to ask questions about what was to be. We were fortunate in having the time to introduce the concept in a framework he could understand. Quietly, and over several months, the idea of the two new sisters became part of Adam's daily existence.

### AWAITING THE BIG DAY

He also had other major life changes unfolding for him. Suddenly, moving him out of his crib and into his big-boy room became important to us. We did not want him to feel evicted by the twins. We chose bed linens and wall decorations he liked and rewarded any attempts on his part to stay in the bed—even if only to have a story read to him. We encouraged his increasing self-reliance, realizing he was not a baby anymore. He perceived we were treating him with respect for his emerging skills and grinned with pride when we let him do little "chores" around the house.

As a full-time working mom, I yearned to spend more special, never-to-be-available-again, singleton mothering time with my boy. My husband, parents and I took vacation time with Adam a few months before my due date. Although it was difficult to be





told to leave work due to medical problems in the pregnancy, I used my time at home to read to Adam, watch him and reassure him. I found myself mourning the future loss of this special time with my son even as I anxiously awaited the birth of my twins.

I told Adam stories of what would happen when the twins wanted to come out. He seemed nonplussed to wake up to his auntie and uncle in our house when I was taken to the hospital for the first time. He simply accepted our explanation, “babies not here yet,” when I came home empty handed later that day. It was more difficult when I was hospitalized for preeclampsia four days prior to my delivery. Adam expected me to arrive as usual from my doctor appointment and cried when I didn’t come home to tuck him into bed. He slept in our bed that night. My husband tried to maintain his usual routine, which did help, but Adam was unsure and upset when visiting me at the hospital. I was happy I had purchased and gift wrapped some stickers and a small car for him and kept them in my overnight bag. Those things and his interest in my hospital bed control panel helped ease the situation. He was able to leave me at the hospital that night without tears.

## BIG BROTHER STATUS

Our identical twins, Emily and Elizabeth, were born on Father’s Day. They arrived with much excitement. One of them had apnea and a resultant NICU stay. Adam met the girls and began playing with my bed’s control panel. Yet another little present—a stuffed animal “gift from the babies”—helped him to realize that they were a good presence in his life. Adam learned to kiss and hug his new sisters. He understood quickly that if they were sleeping, his parents were able to spend more time with him. We tried to attribute good things to the girls’ arrival. He was now a big brother entitled to big-brother benefits. We praised him often, especially for being good with the girls. Frequent small things, such as a pack of jumbo crayons, reinforced good behavior. Of course, spending time with Adam alone was still important to my husband and me. A trip to the store, a few minutes on the swing set, a bedtime story all fit the bill. Family members helped us find time for this.

Adam began to learn more about taking turns when the babies arrived. He understood that each child needed Mommy’s attention. I found myself telling the babies so Adam could hear, “It’s now your turn for a new diaper and then it’s Adam’s turn.” I enlisted Adam’s “help” in minding the babies in the car, asking him to tell me if they were sleeping or if the sun was on their faces. I was careful not to overdo this and make him feel like a servant. We are the most for-

tunate in having Adam’s grandparents, aunt, baby-sitter and others take turns reinforcing how special our little boy still is to us.

## TIME AND EFFORT WELL-SPENT

Children need time to adjust to a new situation. We did the best we could in introducing the concept of twins slowly and in play situations to help our toddler understand the events associated with the birth of his sisters. We had familiar people picking up the slack when I became less physically able to do things at home. We really strived to preserve a routine.

Now that I am back to work full-time, our lives are settling into a happy, if sometimes hectic pattern. Adam, Emily and Elizabeth seem always to have been part of our lives. I’m not sure any of us really remembers life without them. But one thing we are sure of is that taking the time to prepare Adam for the arrival of our twins was time well spent. It helped him to accept the changes in our family with ease and joy. ♥

---

**Susan R. Cohen, M.D.**, of Sharon, Massachusetts, is a pediatrician in the city of Stoughton. She is the mother of three, including identical twins girls.

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## ADDITIONAL TIPS TO PREPARE YOUR SINGLETON

“Allowing our 2-year-old and 5-year-old to visit our newborn preemie twins in the NICU helped them get used to the idea of having them around before they had to share their living space with them.”

—Andy Kushner, father of four, including twins  
Sharon, Massachusetts

“What worked for us was minimizing the disruption in the family. I came home before the babies, which gave me time to re-equilibrate with the two older children. We all worked together to make a “welcome home” banner for when the babies joined us.”

—Linda Kushner, mother of four, including twins  
Sharon, Massachusetts

“Let siblings know the reason mom’s belly is expanding, is because babies are growing inside and getting ready to come out and meet the family. Get them involved and interested in the event before the babies arrive.”

—Debbie Dennis-Johnson, M.D., OB/GYN  
Pasadena, California

“Helping a child adjust from the role of only child to older sibling of twins is best considered part of the prenatal plan. Working to help an older child understand the impending birth of twin siblings and the resulting changes as positive and complementary to their relationship with their parents is an important inoculation for future sibling rivalry and conflict.”

—Michael A. Goldberg, Ph.D.  
Director, Child and Family Psychological Services, Inc.  
Norwood, Massachusetts



# Who's Who?

## Foolproof Strategies for Telling Identical Twins Apart

by Alice M. Vollmar



"I burst into tears when I thought I was holding one baby and then discovered that I was holding the other," recalled Marlene Flanders. "I said to myself, 'I'm their mother, and I can't even tell them apart,' I sobbed. I wondered how many times I'd had them switched."

As Marlene and countless other parents of identical multiples know firsthand, telling identical twins apart can be a challenge for everyone—family, teachers, friends and multiples themselves.

"My gym teacher gets us mixed up, but I wish she'd call me by the right name," said 10-year-old identical twin Andre Deutschlaender. Andy Nieman, 12, gets annoyed at misidentification, too. "When people at school—my teachers and friends—get us mixed up, I feel like they should know who I am," he said. Andy and his co-twin, Adam, look alike, although they are fraternal twins.

It's an accepted fact that no one likes to be called by the wrong name. "A name is a symbol of recognition of our identity, a mark of our sense of ourselves," explained Susan Erbaugh, Ph.D., chief of psychology at Minneapolis Children's Medical Center. "Our name stays with us from home to work, from childhood through adulthood. It defines our distinctiveness. Calling a child by the wrong name says, 'I don't know or care who you are,' or 'We want you to be somebody different.'"

Calling children by the wrong name also "scares kids and makes them mad," Erbaugh added. "As a child's sense of identity is emerging, it's upsetting when people say, in essence, that the child doesn't have a distinct place or identity."

Establishing a sense of self is doubly challenging for a child with a co-twin who looks just like him. Child development specialists tell parents that it's important to help each co-twin develop a concept of herself as a distinct individual.

To aid that process, many parents have found that identification strategies can make it easier to correctly identify each twin and to

avoid inadvertent mix-ups, even in the first few months of multiples' lives. Those strategies also address an underlying fear many parents have of accidentally switching their infant twins' identities permanently.

Marlene Flanders finally put an end to the distressing mix-ups of her twin boys by putting fingernail polish on one of baby Ryan's toenails. Later, she had Ryan's hair trimmed to a point in the back and Aaron's hair squared off. Flanders takes care to call each by the correct name because, as she explained, "They correct other people, but they don't expect their mother to blow it!"

Parents of identical twins tend to take each co-twin's autonomy seriously. "Right from the start, I didn't want to chance a mix-up," said Robin Gale, whose identical girls are now 6-years-old. "My foremost thought has always been that these are two children, two independent individuals. I had a jeweler make gold ID ankle bracelets inscribed with their names, and those bracelets never came off. We just expanded them as Alana and Kayla grew.

When Alana and Kayla were very young, Gale dressed them differently and always knew what outfit each was wearing. "But it was hard for my husband, so he painted fingernail polish on Kayla's pinky fingernail," said Gale.

Applying polish to one twin's toenails or fingernails is an effective strategy, said parents who've used it. So is color-coding twin clothing.

"We didn't have any plan when we brought our identical twins home from the hospital," Karen Jenkins recalled. "So for the first two weeks we painted one of Laura's toenails. Then we divided up all the clothes and gave Denise blues, purples and greens. Laura got pinks, yellows and reds. Now the girls (age 5) are in preschool, and the teachers really appreciate our color coding."

Joan King, whose identical twins are now adults had an equally effective system: "I put brown shoes on Brian and black shoes on



Bill...It was simple, and everybody knew who was who."

Amy Keohane still uses a pink and purple color code to help people properly identify her 6-year-old identical twins. Koehane noted that Jennifer and Andrea look more alike now than when they were babies. Then, their heads were shaped differently, one had more hair, and one's face was a little rounder. Other parents of identical twins have also noted that as their twins grew, they came to resemble each other even more closely than they did as babies.

Parents often distinguish one child from her co-twin by differences in height and weight, face shape, shade of hair, beauty spots or birthmarks, pitch of voice, personality traits and mirror-image characteristics such as an opposite handedness and cowlicks. Dawn Stewart recalled that her infant daughter Megan had a darker complexion at birth than her identical co-twin, Lindsey. A small scar above Lindsey's eyebrow also served as an identity marker.

Penny Morin is grateful for the mirror-image cowlicks (which turn in opposite directions) possessed by her identical 5-year-olds, Jillian and Joleen, and for the differences in their voices. "But from a distance, I have difficulty telling them apart until they speak," she said.

Personal characteristics such as these can also help other people accurately identify each co-twin. But it's usually up to parents or the twins themselves to furnish outsiders with appropriate clues. For example, the Morin twins' aunt was frustrated in her attempts to tell Jillian and Joleen apart until Penny advised her to look at their cowlicks.

Most people can distinguish between identical twins if they take the time to be observant. Andy and Adam Nieman help people identify themselves correctly by choosing different haircuts and clothing. Robin Gale credits her twins' nursery school teachers with paying close attention each morning to what Alana and Kayla are wearing (they wear similar but different clothing that is not color-coded).

"But when Alana and Kayla started kindergarten," Gale said, "I asked them if their teacher knew who was who, and they said, 'No' so I requested that the teachers determine which child is which each morning by observing differences in their clothing. You can tell them apart when you pay attention, and I absolutely expect teachers to do that," Gale said.

Many parents of identical twins wish that more people would make a point of noticing differences in clothing or features. "Twins do get tired of being asked, 'which one are you?'" said Karen Jenkins.

To encourage correct identification, parents can take teachers, relatives and friends aside and suggest ways to tell one twin from the other. For example, a parent might ask to meet with a teacher privately in order to explain the family's "system": she could say, for example, "We've learned that it's very important for twins to be identified separately and correctly, so at home we make it a point to never refer to our girls as 'the twins' and to always use their names. We would really appreciate it if you would do that, too."

Parents are advised to use discretion when clarifying distinctions between their co-twins. It's important not to inadvertently create comparative labels (such as "Jim is the shy one, and John is the outgoing twin") and comparisons such as height and weight only hold up when twins are viewed together. Color-coded clothing or a child's individual characteristics, such as her hair style or her left handedness, are more likely to serve as effective indicators and are less likely to reinforce labeling.

Of course, identification strategies aren't foolproof, and look-alike twins will inevitably be mistaken for one another sometimes. It's wise to help twins develop a coping strategy for confusion, counseled Erbaugh. "You can let them know that you understand how hard it is to be mistaken for each other," she said. "'Doctors, lawyers and movie stars,' you might explain, 'want their names displayed on doors and want top billing. They get upset if their name isn't displayed. When you are called your co-twin's name, it's like you are the star and someone has put the wrong name on the door! That's hard to take.'"

Parents should help their twins come up with tactful but assertive ways in which they might respond to confused teachers, classmates or even family members. Erbaugh suggested that parents might tell each co-twin, "I know what's special about you, and the rest of the world will, too, if we help them out a bit."

A twin can be taught to explain to anyone who makes a mistake that he is John and not Jim, said Erbaugh. He can also learn to furnish people with an identity clue, such as, "one way you can tell us apart

is by our hair. I part my hair on the left, and Jim parts his on the right."

"I explained to Christopher and Andre that people make mistakes because the two of them look so much alike," said parent Ruth Deutschlaender. "I advise them to just say, 'I'm Christopher' or 'I'm Andre' when that happens."

Andre said that's exactly what he does when the occasion arises. "You can tell us apart by our voices," he also advised. "We sound different." Penny Morin's daughter Joleen the first-born of identical twins, got upset being called by her co-twin's name. So Morin capitalized on having another set of identical twins in the neighborhood to help Joleen understand why that happened. "I asked her if she sometimes got our neighbor's twins mixed up. She said, 'yes,' so I told her, 'That's what happens when people mistake you for Jillian.'"

Ideally, parents and siblings function as role models by identifying and addressing each twin by name. Parents who are conscientious about recognizing and reinforcing each twin's identity can help twins avoid the resentment voiced by one adult at having been, "a twin, not an individual, always a part of a set rather than a complete person."

Not all adult twins feel that way, however. Beatrice Hawkinson and Bernice Lindberg, 71, love being twins. About their younger days, Beatrice said, "Our last name was Gustafson, and we both had the nickname 'Gustie' so we didn't get called the wrong name. Now, when people mistake me for Bernice, I just say, 'Oh, I'm Beatrice, Bernice's twin.'"

These adult identical twins feel enriched by their friendship, have never wished not to be twins, and handle identity mix-ups with a touch of humor. "If someone I don't know smiles at me in the grocery store, I smile back because otherwise, they'll go and ask Beatrice why she was so stuck-up the other day," chuckled Bernice.

A sense of humor helps twins live with the inevitable, occasional mix-up. And yes, even moms and dads sometimes err and call one of their twins the wrong name. Then, it's reassuring to remember that even parents of singletons call their offspring the wrong name from time to time—and they don't have a good excuse!

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**Alice M Vollmar** of Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a freelance writer and the mother of six children, including boy/girl twins.

Michael Keefe is a 17-year old senior in high school and submitted this piece for a school assignment. It's his fun take on being a twin, his relationship with his twin sister and the parents who raised them.

# To Compare or Contrast that is the Question

by Michael Keefe



On October 27th, 1993, my mother decided it was time she relinquish the children she'd been carrying in her womb for seven months, and deliver her first kids. At 1:24 on that autumn morning my parents were blessed with the birth of their first son, and then as expected at 1:26 another child was born, my twin sister Caroline. Caroline and I are two people who happened to have spent some seven months in very close quarters together. Society calls us male-female fraternal twins and for the last 16.964 years, Caroline and I have developed into sui-generis people.

My father has at times referred to Caroline as "the son I never had." I'm not sure who should be more offended at this statement, my sister or me, but I do understand where he gets this notion. Caroline is the athlete in the family. She runs cross-country, and

within the last year she has played competitive basketball, ice hockey, softball, and soccer. She can pick up sports with ease and excels in little time at the ones she tries. For instance, she joined the cross-country team this fall and is already one of the top runners. I, on the other hand, am less of an accomplished athlete, although not for lack of effort and at one time or another have played basketball, soccer, tennis, golf, hockey (for 15 minutes, at six I was not a huge fan of tight skates), baseball, and even cross country. Unfortunately, many of these athletic pursuits were met with failure. When I was eight, one of the girls on my T-Ball team poured red Gatorade on me, thus ending my future as a professional baseball player. Running suicides wasn't exactly my thing in basketball, and I've blocked out the memories of my soccer days. My sister likes to remind me of these minor shortcomings frequently. Unfortunately for her, society perceives that only one thing matters in high school athletics (and for the sake of argument I choose to agree with society on this one) are championships. In this area, because there is one sport where I have excelled, I have them, and she doesn't! The sport...sailing (the validity of sailing as a sport is for another time). When she points out that she's the true athlete, I simply ask the question that many ask of Tom Brady and Peyton Manning. Who's got more rings? And unfortunately for her, at this moment, I dig into my pocket and pull out the 2008 sailing state championship ring, and as far as I'm concerned the debate is over.

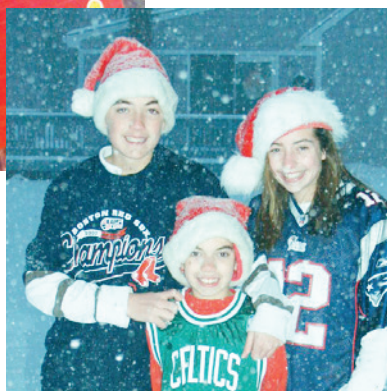
Caroline and I both have the same work ethic; get everything done, but the way we go about it differs. She tends to get stressed out while doing her homework and will work all weekend on assignments, always trying to work ahead, and be ready for every class. I take a different approach; I tend to work late into the night







doing homework. However, for me there comes a certain point where I decide that assignments can wait, and it's time for bed. I'm confident that everything will get done and have no problem falling asleep even if my homework isn't 100 percent complete.



Ironically, when it comes to other non-academic aspects, I am the stressed one, and she's laid back. I can't fall asleep unless my bedroom is in perfect order, my backpack is packed, and I know exactly what my schedule is for the next day. Caroline, on the other hand, falls asleep wherever, and she frantically scrambles in the morning to find everything she needs and make it to school on time.

In terms of political views, we are polar opposites. I would describe myself as ascribing to a liberal ideology. Caroline, although not very engaged in politics and current events, if prodded, takes a conservative viewpoint on many matters (I don't know where she gets it). Caroline and I also have many different priorities in life, and, thus, do things at different times. I have yet to get my driver's license; she has had her driver's license for three months. I enjoy adventurous vacations such as hiking or whitewater rafting; she enjoys a slower paced luxurious vacation. I work because I love being able to sail and teach all day; she scoops ice cream just to get paid.

Caroline and I are two siblings that have been in competition for at least 16 years. We don't know when our disagreements began, but we do have an ultrasound picture of her punching me. However different we may be, however contentious we might get, we have a special "twin" connection. I suppose we must have done some bonding during those first seven months in the womb (although I'm still waiting for the whole telepathy thing to kick in...)

**Michael Keefe** is 17-years-old from a small coastal town in southeastern Massachusetts and is a Junior at Boston College High school, a private, all male, Jesuit Catholic High school in Boston. He participates in Model United Nations, Mock Trial, and is a member of the Varsity sailing team. He will also be traveling to the Dominican Republic in April on a service/immersion trip focusing on serving and learning from the poor. Michael plans to attend college upon graduating high school, although, has no idea where but does know, however that he will not be attending the same college as my twin, as Caroline and Michael have an agreement that they will not be attending the same college.



Continued from page 15

TODDLERS

## 5 Learning Period

Potty training can be frustrating for parents because they are learning new techniques to teach their child, according to Bradley and Ittner. From showing them how to pull down pants to friendly reminders like, "Let's go potty." Potty training is an entirely new arena for most parents. Accordingly, Bradley advises that accidents will happen, with minor setbacks and periods of regression for the child and parent.

## 6 Parental Attitudes and Behaviors

Bradley and Ittner stress the acceptance of feelings. "Frustration or perfectionism," Bradley says, "are feelings you wouldn't want to transmit to your child."

Parents and children are learning and developing new skills with each other. Bradley reminds everyone, "Be gentle with yourself and your child."

Whether the topic is positive discipline or potty training, Bradley and Ittner encourage "firm and kind" parenting. "Be kind out of respect for our children and firm out of respect for ourselves," Bradley explains.

When a problem arises between parents on the "how-to-potty" approach, Bradley encourages parents to privately discuss the matter away from the children. One approach is to use a code word that signals to your partner the need to talk. One couple in one of their potty training classes offered their code word of "Bob" which stood for "Back off Buddy," when a potty training issue arose.

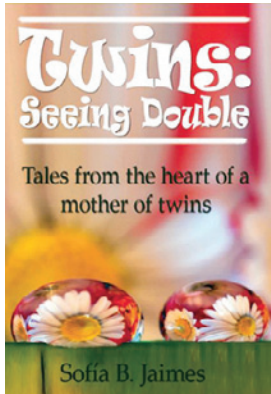
Most of the couples reported that jointly they form the "firm and kind" parenting approach, but individually each parent tended to be closer to one spectrum than sharing both characteristics. While one tended to be firm, the other leaned towards being kind.

Bradley acknowledged the gifts both types of parenting offer. A "firm" parent brings the gift of structure and boundaries and a "kind" parent bring the gift of love and patience. Children need both these gifts. "Create the balance of structure and boundaries, within an atmosphere of love and patience, and the children will thrive," Bradley stated.

Since attending this class, my husband and I have been able to turn the question, "Potty train now or potty train later?" into a positive statement... "We think now is the time and, in the team approach to potty training, unity works." ♥

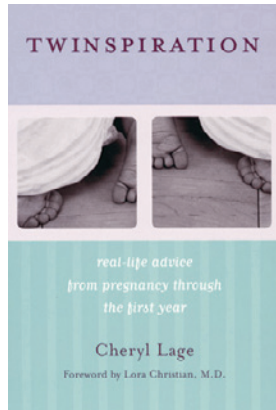
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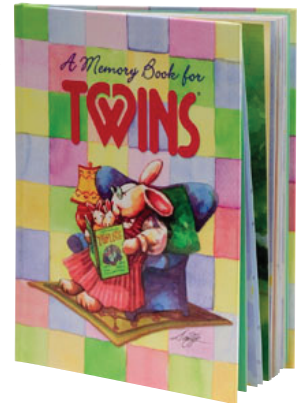
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**2** Izzy and Holly~3 years old



**3** Kate Elizabeth and Emma Grace  
6-mos old



**4** Makenzie and Holden~8-mos old



**5** Alessandra and Annaliese  
11-weeks old



**6** Owen and Blake~17-mos old



**7** Owen and Blake~17-mos old



**8** Sydney and Mason~4 years old



**9** Jack and Jameson~10-mos old



**10** Ghaba and Tink~3-mos old



**11** Autumn and Alex~18-mos old



**12** Danie and Johan~13-mos old

**Based on Parental Reports.**

- |            |            |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 - ID-G/G | 5 - ID-G/G | 9 - FR-B/B  |
| 2 - FR-G/G | 6 - FR-B/B | 10 - FR-B/G |
| 3 - ID-G/G | 7 - ID-B/B | 11 - FR-B/G |
| 4 - FR-B/G | 8 - FR-B/G | 12 - ID-B/B |

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TWINS™ Magazine is pleased to partner with the CuteKid.com to announce the 2010 Cutest Twins/Multiples of the Year as voted on by CuteKid.com:

# Congratulations Anna & Sophia

from Ebervale, PA!



Anna & Sophia were the January 2010 Twin Monthly Winners.

The judges from CuteKid.com saw so many cute twins & multiples this past year & had the tough job of picking only one set! These adorable twins were the standouts! Their proud mom said, "I have been honored to be part of such a repu-

table contest & I am truly proud when I tell people the girls are 'Official CuteKids'. The CuteKid has made it possible for the twins to get signed with top modeling agency Generation Model Management in NYC & begin successful modeling careers. At 18 months old, the girls had a role on *The Sopranos*. Just this year alone, they have been featured in *Vogue Magazine*, *Parents Magazine* & *Target* ads as well as *TWINS Magazine's* winners round-up. Anna & Sophia are active 5 year olds. Anna enjoys dressing up, dance & gymnastics. She plans to have a career as an artist. Sophia enjoys swimming, soccer, dance, reading & dressing up. She wants to be a teacher. They both attend Pre-K. Thanks for this honor!"

Anna and Sophia are identical twins and were born at 36 weeks gestation weighing 4 lbs 2 oz and 4 lbs. 15 oz. Mom says, "They are wonderful sisters and best friends, too. Oddly enough for monozygotic identical

twins, Anna is left handed and Sophia is right handed. Anna loves art and Sophia loves books." (Editor's note: monozygotic identical twins can have mirror-image traits such as right and left handed differences and different hair whorls. See article on page 22 that discusses foolproof strategies for telling identical twins apart!)

Congrats Anna & Sophia on the title of "2010 CuteKid Twins of the Year". Also, the girls are being featured on the cover of *TWINS™ Magazine* this issue as one of their grand prizes for winning! ♥



Click on this link: [http://www.thecutekid.com/photo-contest-twins.php?style=blue&utm\\_source=TCK&utm\\_medium=affil\\_3&affiliate\\_pro\\_tracking\\_id=971:3:U](http://www.thecutekid.com/photo-contest-twins.php?style=blue&utm_source=TCK&utm_medium=affil_3&affiliate_pro_tracking_id=971:3:U) and learn more about

how to enter YOUR twins/multiples in the 2011 Cutest Twins/Multiples of the Year contest by CuteKid.com!



YOU CAN LISTEN to the actual call to the winners of the 2010 Cutest Twins/Multiples of the Year: <http://www.thecutesttwins.com/audio/2010/2010-twins-call.wav>





# FOUR SHOES, FOUR SOCKS, FOUR MITTENS AND TWO HATS

I think I hate winter. I haven't always hated winter. It used to be kind of fun, what with the possibility of days off school or work, and hot chocolate... yummy hot chocolate. But that was before I charged into a winter with four small children in tow. Two of them a set of toddler twins who have yet to be convinced of the importance of shoes. I should have foreseen that hats and mittens would be less than welcome additions. The blindfold of optimism strikes again.

When the temperature began to drop, I dug into the back of the closet to prepare. I found warmer jackets for my two older kids and hats and gloves that fit them. They were all set. But the hats my toddlers wore last year were a bit small and I could find only one set of toddler-sized mittens. As babies they simply kept their hands under blankets most of the time they were outside, I knew that wasn't going to happen now that they could walk.

The lone set of mittens looked a bit threadbare, not the best way to stay warm, since they had already been used by two kids. They couldn't be used by two at once anyway so I decided to start from scratch. I bought two of the same hat and mitten sets, one



pink and one blue. I don't usually go for the matching thing with my twins, but I couldn't resist. They were going to be so cute in their matching hats.

On the first cold day, I bundled them up and took the first twin out to the van. I

opened the door to collect his sister and she handed me her hat and mittens. She was apparently done with them and she hadn't even left the house. I took the warm clothes in one hand and her in the other and brought her out to the van. I had to remove her brother's mittens from her car seat before I could put her in it. He was done with his mittens, too. I buckled both twins and re-hatted and re-mittened them, then reminded my seven-year-old that he could not go to school sans jacket.

As I checked the rearview mirror to back out of the driveway, I saw a pink mitten fly through the air. I dropped my oldest at school and then arrived at the preschool, where I would need to get out and walk my daughter to her classroom. That meant we would all need to get out. I opened the side door and a toddler shoe fell out. It belonged to the toddler on the other side of the

van. Both twins had stripped off not only their hats and mittens, but also their shoes and socks. The one closer to me was determinedly tugging on a pant leg.

I put everything back onto my little ones and then sorted out my four-year-old, whose gloves had two empty fingers. We walked up to the school with a stop every other second to reapply a mitten, all the while receiving annoyed looks from my toddlers, who didn't seem to understand why their hands were cold.

The next day I did not bundle my twins at the start of our journey. I left their four shoes, four socks, four mittens and two hats on the floor of the van where they had left them. I planned to fully dress them only once we needed to exit the van.

This plan did not quite work though because I was already standing in the cold (gloveless myself to better manipulate tiny clothing) when I noticed that we were short one blue mitten. I wondered how long to look for it before my son would be colder waiting than he would be rushing into the building without it. He started crying as he waved his bare hand at me. I couldn't tell if he was upset because his hand was freezing (like mine) or if he was just concerned because he knew there were supposed to be two mittens.

Since tear-shaped icicles were a bad idea either way, I

abandoned my search and brought us all into a heated space as quickly as I could, but only after chasing a pink mitten that had been thrown from the stroller and was blowing across the parking lot. I was afraid that blue mitten had been kicked out in the car-pool line by my oldest. We already lost a shoe this way. But I did eventually (with the help of a flashlight) track it down.

I guess I don't really hate winter. My kids look as adorable as I expected in their little hats, when they are actually wearing them. And I'm getting better at keeping tabs on all those cold weather necessities. I'll just keep putting them back on over and over until they get the idea to leave them on....Or, until springtime. ♥



**Amanda Hamm** lives in North Carolina. She is the author of *Double Take: My First Year as a Mother of Twins*.





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