

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

# TWINS™

## Celebrity Hit List

Our interview with  
twins Peyton &  
Spencer List!

[www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com)

**Why Preschool  
is Important for  
Your Multiples**

**10 Tips for  
Flying with  
Twin Babies!**

April 2012

**Conversations  
and Your Twins**

**7 Tips for Getting  
the Words Flowing**

**Taking Young Twins to  
DISNEY?**

**It's all in the Planning!**





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**by Michael Freeby**

(www.michaelfreebyphotography.com)

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## On the Cover:

Peyton and Spencer List just celebrated their 14th birthday this month. Both are child actors and involved in numerous television and movie projects. Peyton is on the cast of the Disney hit show "Jessie" and recently wrapped up shooting on "Diary of a Wimpy Kid 3: Dog Days" where she reprises her role as 'Holly Hills'. Spencer stars as the title role in Famke Janssen's directorial debut "Bringing Up Bobby" in which he co-stars opposite Milla Jovovich, Bill Pullman and Marcia Cross. Read more about twins, Peyton and Spencer in our center feature this issue.

**6** Skunk 2, Stef 0



**Inspired by London Grace...**

As the Editor-in-Chief of TWINS Magazine, I am often inspired by so many amazing parents of multiples that I am blessed to have the pleasure of meeting. Recently, I spoke to a dynamic, driven and passionate mother of twins, Lindsey Sandefur, and her story has truly inspired me. Lindsey has not only developed an innovative, brand new bottle feeding system specifically for infant twins called 'Table for Two' but she has also committed her new company to helping a very personal and worthy cause!

When Lindsay and her husband Matt found out they were having twins they were thrilled and at her 12-week check her doctor told her there were 20 fingers and toes and they also found out they would be having twin girls! After their 16-week ultrasound, however, it was a different story. The ultrasound tech called the doctor in earlier than normal, so that is when she immediately felt a wave of anxiety. After examining the ultrasound screen, the doctor told her in a very calm voice, "Baby A is missing her left hand." Lindsey said she couldn't even begin to explain the overwhelming shock, fear and sadness her and her husband both felt. The doctor assured them that everything else looked perfect and that their little girl would be just fine. They later found out that their daughter's left arm had gotten caught in the amniotic band, which had amputated it just a few inches below her elbow. It took them months to cope with their news, but with the love and support of family and friends, and her regular OB, they got through it and were excited and ready when their twin daughters, London Grace and Leyton Reese were born on November 17, 2009.

London has been wearing a prosthetic since she was 6 months old. She was able to crawl perfectly with it, and today she can do everything, as if she were born with it. Through London's amazing tenacity and will, they saw right away that miss-

ing a hand is not going to hold her back from accomplishing anything – it may, in fact, push her to do even more in her life.

Lindsey, so inspired by London Grace's beautiful, loving, sweet, sassy, hilarious, strong-willed personality, launched a charity in her namesake called "London's Grace". Her company, Table For Two, Inc. reserves a portion of the profits of every sale of the product to go to kids whose parents cannot afford prosthetics. "It's amazing when you see a two year-old boy who was born without arms holding a crayon and colors for the first time. It was so inspiring to see the smile on his face and it brought so much meaning to me," says Lindsey. She truly believes that London is more than just a blessing to her and her husband Matt – she is and will be a blessing to countless others as well.



Lindsey is an amazing twin-mom that is truly an inspiration for us all. You can read more about her new feeding system "Table for Two" in this issue. Also, be sure to check out our 'Cover Kids' center feature story about teenage twin sensations, Peyton and Spencer List along with all the other fantastic information inside...

We hope you all will enjoy this beautiful spring weather and take some time to go outside and share this special time with your kids!

**Christa D. Reed** has been the Editor-in-Chief of TWINS™ Magazine since December 2007 and is also a professional Media/PR specialist. Christa lives in Colorado with her husband Aaron and four boys, including a set of fraternal twins.

Sincerely,

*Christa D Reed*

Christa Reed  
Editor-in-Chief



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## Eco Twins-8 year old reporters

Have you heard about a new video series produced by twin-mom, Tiffany Casanova and featuring 8-year-old twin boys, Tristin and Tyler? The series is all about tips on "going green" while also having lots of fun in New York City! These young dynamic boys are mini-reporters that talk about saving the earth. Tristin and Tyler take an adventure through



the city in each short-form episode. Whether they are checking out cool "green" products or learning how the subway works, each episode teaches kids something about the big city around us or is just fun "edu-tainment." Then, just to make sure you're paying attention, Tristin and Tyler quiz you on key parts of each episode! The best

part about the show is that your child can experience the same fun you see in each episode! So people can follow Tristin and Tyler and then do the same things with their children! Their website, [www.tristinandtyler.com](http://www.tristinandtyler.com) includes videos, a blog, activities and more.



Click on this link to check out their latest video: <http://www.tristinandtyler.com/videos/>

## The Famous "Twins Days Festival" in Twinsburg, Ohio is scheduled for August 3-5, 2012!



Did you know that there is a "Twins Days Festival" each summer in Twinsburg, Ohio? It is a super fun

weekend packed with so many activities and events just for twins! There is a golf tournament, corn hole tournament, field games for kids, inflatable bouncers, a 'Double Take' parade, twins contests, a twin talent show, a 5K race/walk, entertainment, food and so much more. Check out the official website for the "Twins Days Festival" and make plans to bring your twins to this year's festival if you can! Visit <http://www.twinsdays.org> to learn more.

## 62-Year-Old Identical Twins Release New Album!



"The Del Zorros", are identical twin brothers from New England, who are musicians/

composers/ recording artists and currently living in Castle Hayne, NC. They have been writing and performing their own songs since the age of 15, and was inspired by the best of their time: The Beatles, The Kinks, The Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel and many other pop and folk artists of their time. They are children of the 1960's who never grew up (according to their bio!) They have just released a new song called, "Younger Every Day" (cover art by Cissy Russell) and it was released as a single on iTunes & everywhere else in March and appeals to the Baby Boomer generation. To learn more about The Del Zorros visit their website at:

<http://www.reverbnation.com/delzorros> and you can check out their music video of their new song "Younger Every Day" at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU2rtM\\_xmKk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU2rtM_xmKk)

## NEW PRODUCTS JUST FOR TWINS—CHECK THESE OUT!

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browse the entire collection at: [www.JanelRussell.com](http://www.JanelRussell.com)

## TWINN Dolls for TWINS!

Twins for twins! My Twinn dolls, from Child's Play Communications, are hand-crafted to capture the





unique characteristics of girls age 3-12. Simply submit a photo of the girl's (or girls'!) face you would like to replicate, complete a freckling sheet indicating any freckle, birthmark and mole placement and choose an outfit for the doll. Just as real twins are never exactly alike—no two My Twinn dolls are exactly alike either. Skilled artisans hand paint eyebrows, cheeks, lips and special features like freckles and birthmarks to replicate each child's likeness in striking detail. Learn more at Twitter: ChildsPlayCC or on Facebook: Childs Play Communications

## NEW—Matching Sibling Sets by Smockadot Kids!

Smockadot Kids ([www.smockadot-kids.com](http://www.smockadot-kids.com)) is the go-to site for matching sibling sets that come smocked, monogrammed, or appliquéd. Choose from superhero, tractor, Tinkerbell, Peter Pan, birthday cake, and more! The best part is that Smockadot Kids offers affordable prices for high quality outfits. See more at: <http://www.smockadotkids.com>



## NEW—Personalized books just for twins!

I See Me! Personalized children' books provides the highest quality, most



personalized children's books available. Their mission is to increase self esteem in children through personalized books that celebrate the

uniqueness of each child. The goal of these books is to show each child how absolutely unique and special he or she is, to teach the child how to spell his or her name, and to build vocabulary skills. They now have a book that can be personalized just for TWINS! It is a Mom's Choice Award winner as well as a Creative Child Magazine "Book of the Year" Award both in 2010. Visit to learn more: <http://www.iseeme.com/twinsbook.html>

## Bella Ink Designs Doubles Your Fun with Twin Theme Shower Invitations

Bella Ink Designs, a stationery design studio and manufacturer just outside of Chicago, Illinois, now offers three invitations designed especially for the host or hostess throwing a shower for new parents expecting twins. Bella Ink's Spring 2012 line of baby shower invitations are now available at boutique card and gift shops nationwide and has been hand-drawn and/or hand-painted in watercolors by Bella Ink Designs President, Melissa Danaher. The invitations all demonstrate Danaher's ability to effortlessly mix various colors and patterns on a single design.

### BH-23, Double Trouble

The newest addition to the Bella Ink line-up of baby shower invitations

geared towards couples having twins is this 8.5" x 5.5" card printed on a premium, textured cream card stock. A pair of cheetah print carriages sits against a gender-neutral yellow backdrop. The cheetah print is repeated at the base of the card. A green border around the text box in the center of the invitation, and a pair of green vines, help highlight the important details of the event. The suggested retail price for a box of ten hand-glittered invitations is \$19.00, \$17.00 without glitter. Cards are also available in bulk upon request.



### BH-16, Doubly Blessed

BH-16, Doubly Blessed, is the perfect card for new parents with more traditional sensibilities. Brown and white damask print carriages sit at the bottom of this 8.5" x 5.5" invitation with a gender-neutral green and white backdrop of vines and paisleys. A band of brown and white damask runs through the middle of the invitation, beneath the text box, which is bordered by simple brown filigree. The suggested retail price for a box of ten hand-glittered invitations is \$19.00, \$17.00 without glitter. Cards are also available in bulk upon request.



### BT-40, The Twins

This tea-length invitation, measuring 9" x 4.25," radiates cheer through it's layers of yellow and white, and green and white polka dot prints. Pink filigree

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by Stephanie Langstaff

Ok so I HAVE to share what happened to me last night. House was finally quiet, kids sleeping and laundry almost done. I let the 2 furry things out one more time before bed and boom! They took off to the side out the house. With Declan in the lead and Sam trying to keep up, they darted into the neighbor's bushes. Out comes what I thought was a rabbit (SKUNK), and Declan starts fighting, like really fighting with it. Well the title of this entry is a spoiler...yes they lost. Declan ended up foaming at the mouth and rolling on the ground. I put Sam in the house thinking she was untouched (FAIL).

My neighbor Kim was pulling in her driveway and saw the whole thing and came to the rescue. Jim started googling ways to get the stink out for me and we managed to wash Declan with tomato juice, hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, dish soap, dog shampoo, and anything else we could find. Anyway, he still stinks. Sam was inside stinking up the house, unbeknownst to me...

So, went in the house, realized Sam was a hot mess and threw her in the tub. Fresh out of my homemade remedy, I used dog shampoo (FAIL). Meanwhile, the big brown dog was downstairs tearing into what remained of the baking soda. Lucky me got to vacuum the house when this was all done...wait it's still not all done.

Needless to say, I'm going to try to head to PetSmart and get some strong skunk junk after work... ♡





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# 10 THINGS

## I Wish I Knew Before Having Twins (A DAD'S SURVIVAL LIST)

by Sean Capelle

No one can prepare you enough for having twins become a part of your daily life. Nothing comes close to the real thing. People passing by will ask, "How do you do it?" and all you can really do is shrug because there is no accounting for what you do. You just do it.

I think I carried my jaw on the floor a whole week after my wife and I discovered

our "one more child" would be "two more children." How would we leave the house anymore? Would we even have enough money to do anything outside of the house? Where do we go from here?

Nothing is easy when it comes to twins. However, I like to think I've

picked up a trick or two along the way. So here they are (in no particular order):

**1.** Forget that fact that you'll become a walking circus.

Anytime you enter a store you are almost guaranteed someone asking if they are twins, or saying, "Looks like you have your hands full." While these aren't inherently bad things, they also do little to help when you're trying to get in and out of the store as quickly as possible. I find that a simple "yup," does well.

**2.** People will go out of their way to keep a door open for you. It's amazing, really. You could have your arms full of bags and people won't even stop to lend a hand. You can assume they will notice you struggling and help out. It becomes an entirely different story, though, with twins involved. Trying to squeeze a side-by-side stroller through the door? People will hold the door, wait, and even shimmy to the side as you navigate the narrow channel.

**3.** The twins will tag team you. There's no getting around that, especially if it's just one of you versus them. The best solution is to get them on the same schedule. Failing to do so will turn your whole day into nothing but alternating between them. Only one of them is hungry? Doesn't matter. Wake them both up and feed them at the same time.

**4.** By the time they start crawling, they'll both want to get into things. Sometimes it's not even the same thing. One might wander off in one direction, and the other the complete opposite way. As soon as you pick one of them out of a room they're not supposed to be in, the other zips past and enters that room, too. Move the first one as far away as possible, dart back and remove the other one. You'll have just enough time to close the door before the first one returns.

**5.** Treat your twins as individuals. Just because they were

born on the same day doesn't mean they come with the same set of behaviors. Don't expect your twin boy to start doing the same things his twin sister is doing. Even if you have two boys, one of them will gain developmental ground while the other one takes a bit longer to catch up. Trust me; enjoy any sort of limitations for as long as you can. Once they start running, they don't stop.

**6.** The first three months will be hell. It will get better. Just resign yourself to the fact that the twins will not sleep through the night. You may even find that one sleeps just fine, but is then woken up by the other. They're both going to want stuff at the same time. You'll feel like you never get a chance to sit down and just relax. Just know that it will get better. Not by much, but certainly more than those first three months.

**7.** Invest in the right stroller the first time. You would think getting a stroller is a pretty simple task. If it's one thing you'll learn about twins, it's that nothing is as easy as it seems. For example, that side-by-side stroller is great for mobility, but you're limited to only being able to enter certain doors. A two seater will get through doors fine, though it feels like you're driving a stretch limousine. Consider these things before you purchase your first one. If not, you'll be buying a second one. And a third one...and...

**8.** Shop and sell at consignment stores. Look in your area for parents of multiples groups. They will often host consignment sales, where you can enter it as a seller. Bag and tag anything that isn't needed anymore to sell. This will free up some room in your house, as well as help finance all of the new stuff you have to buy.

*Sean Capelle is a wry wit writer in central Florida. He has a two-year-old daughter and one-year-old boy and girl twins. Hobbies include writing, bass guitar, Apple products, and trying to find a moment's peace. He and his wife tag team to stop the kids from tag-teaming them.*



Continued on page 29



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PREGNANCY

by Bethany Masters

A large photograph of a pregnant woman with dark hair, smiling and looking down at her belly. She is lying in a hospital bed with white linens. Her hands are resting on her abdomen. The background is a bright, slightly out-of-focus hospital room.

# Top 10 *Survival Tips* for Hospital Bed Rest



When I was pregnant with my twins I had to be on bed rest for ten weeks. The first four of those weeks were spent at the community hospital. Here is what I learned:

1. Bring whatever you can from home. Clothes, pillows, toothpaste, etc. You will feel much more comfortable.
2. If possible, call before you are scheduled to arrive to find out what you have in your room. The hospital had complimentary wi-fi. The room I was in also had a cd player and a dvd player. It was so nice to know that I could bring my laptop and favorite movies with me.
3. Stash snacks in your room and ask your family to bring you occasional meals. The snack options the hospital had were very limited and the meal menu was rotating. Even though the food was good by week three, I was bored with the menu options.
4. Ask if the hospital has any parenting education programs or groups you may go to. My doctor allowed me out of

my room once a week for a breastfeeding support group that was held on the hospital's first floor. It was the highlight of my week!

5. Educate yourself and be your own advocate. Never be afraid to ask questions. When I arrived at the hospital the nurse inserted an IV line "just in case". The IV line was very uncomfortable. Day three I asked for it to be removed and the doctor okayed it. I did not end up needing an IV during my whole 4 week stay!
6. Ask your doctor to give you a firm idea of when you will be going home. I was hospitalized because there was concern that my twins would be born dangerously premature. My doctor and I set week 28 of my pregnancy as the goal date for me to go home if I had not delivered yet. When the days were long and difficult that goal kept me sane.
7. If there are any projects that you need to do before the babies come and that you can do on bed rest take it with you. The days on hospital bed rest

can seem to drag on forever. I had been working on a pregnancy scrap book and I used my hospital bed rest time to work on that. I am glad I did because once my girls were born there was very little time for projects.

8. Get into a routine. It will help your days go faster.
9. Take advantage of the time to bond with your babies. It can be very frightening to be on bed rest if the health of your babies is at stake. It was hard for me not to worry that my girls would be born too early and be very sick or not survive. One of the things I worked into my routine was reading them a book at night. It helped me keep my focus on the fact that bed rest was for them and that I was doing all I could to protect them.
10. Get as much rest as you possibly can. Nap. Relax. Once your babies come you will be very busy and starting from a rested point instead of already being exhausted is a huge help.

## Are Your Twins Identical?





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# Finally *an Infant Twin Feeding Solution!*

by Christa D. Reed

Have you been looking for an “easy button” when it comes to bottle feeding your infant twins? Well, we think we may have found one! If only this product was around when my twins were babies it could have made a huge difference when it came time to bottle feeding them... (Sigh!)

The product, Table for Two is a revolutionary new baby feeding station that tackles the unique challenge of bottle-feeding twins at the same time. We all know how stressful, messy, confusing and uncomfortable feeding times can be and this new product solves these problems and for that, we felt we had to share it with all of you!

After giving birth to twin girls, London and Leyton, founder and creator of Table for Two, LLC Lindsey Sandefur, was very determined to breastfeed but soon realized that without the help of her husband, who had returned to work, the task was desperately difficult to do alone. “I called a few of my friends with twins to ask them how in the world they

were able to feed two babies at once, but they seemed as frustrated as I was,” says Sandefur.

She then tried numerous attempts to breastfeed her twin girls simultaneously by using two different styles of breast-feeding pillows but continued to fail at this task without any help. So in order to keep them on the same schedule and to find a feeding solution that worked best for her and her situation, she made the decision to bottle feed them.

“I then quickly realized after encountering unbearable neck, back and shoulder pain and a huge mess trying to bottle-feed using two u-shaped pillows or bouncy seats, I had to find a better feeding solution. I was determined to create an easy, stress-free method to support both babies securely while keeping them in the perfect feeding posture,” she adds.

That is where the idea for her newly designed Table For Two, dual feeding station came to life. It is constructed of







100% high-density polyurethane foam covered in easy-to-clean, non-toxic, water-resistant polyester fabric. It also has sturdy seatbelts that keep babies safe, secure and comfortable.

"The perfected angle helps enhance digestion and relieves the symptoms of reflux, colic, colds, and breathing difficulties,"

says Sandefur. As a mother of twins she truly understands the importance of having two separate bottle holders to prevent spills and mix-ups, along with comfortable armrests for the feeder. "Now no more neck and back pain or tipped bottles either! Another plus is that it cuts feeding time in half because both babies can feed at once. What a timesaver that is, especially during middle-of-the-night feedings!"

This new feeding product features stylish and colorful Velcro®-fastened 100%-cotton seat cushion inserts that is

removable and machine washable. On the back of the unit is a convenient carrying handle to make it easy to transport.

Table For Two is not only a blessing to parents, but also to underprivileged children with limb deficiencies. To honor London, one of the Sandefur twins who were born without a left hand because it was caught in the amniotic band, a portion of the profits of every single sale goes to children whose parents cannot afford prosthetics for their children. "Not only is this product a life-saver for all parents of infant twins, it is a wonderful way to help others while you simplify and improve your life and the lives of your twins."

Want to learn more about this new infant twin feeding product? Click here to visit their website: <http://www.buytablefortwo.com/> ♥

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# Conversation

## and Your Kids

### 7 TIPS FOR GETTING THE WORDS FLOWING

by Chéla Wallace

Like many twins, mine were born premature and consequently somewhat delayed in their verbal development. To get the conversational ball rolling, I refined techniques I'd developed with their older brother to draw him out when

he was a toddler. The result: the twins (now seven) are confident communicators, having long ago caught up with their peers. Here are some ways to bring out the chatterbox in your children:

**Chéla Wallace** is the mother of three boys (a thirteen-year-old and seven-year-old twins) and a freelance writer who lives and works in the Portland, Oregon area. Her articles have been featured in local newspapers, as well as *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Twins and More* and *TWINS Magazine*. In addition to her creative writing, she has been a technical and business writer/copyeditor for over 15 years.

**Talk like you would to an adult.** Show by not only what you say, but *how* you say it that you feel what they say and think are important. (Do this even with infants: they will pick up on the rhythm, tone, emotional meaning and context of what you're saying, even if they don't get the precise meaning.) This approach

makes talking with your children more enjoyable for you, while at the same time teaching them the art and rhythm of give-and-take conversation.

**Listen and respond with enthusiasm.** When in the presence of a bright idea or sudden insight, take a second, smile broadly and acknowledge the intellect behind it. On a recent trip to Costco, I had forgotten my list. I muttered out loud, "I know I'm forgetting something..." One of my twins piped up, "We need nuggets!" He had heard me mention it earlier in the day—and beamed with pride as I said, "Thank you SO MUCH! You've got a great memory, buddy. And you just saved Mommy a trip to the store!" This positive event stayed with him: the next few times we went to Costco, he happily mentioned how he had remembered nuggets and helped Mom.

**You don't have to be an expert to know what you're talking about.** OK, I confess, I do know the names of all the Thomas the Tank Engine characters (and will soon know all the LEGO Bionicle names). You don't have to know everything about your children's latest passion to listen attentively. Just occasionally interject an appropriate com-





ment and/or ask a meaningful question. By validating your children's passions, you are acknowledging their interests are worthwhile in and of themselves. And by treating your children and their ideas with respect, you are teaching them how to not only treat others, but how they should expect others to treat them.

### Share your interests with your children.

An easy way to strike up a conversation with your children is to share with them what you enjoy. My husband loves to design and build things; when the twins were four, they all went to a woodworking show, where the boys amazed onlookers with their ability to accurately identify miter saws, lathes and drill presses. It was a great bonding moment for father and sons. Sharing your enthusiasm for your passions also gives your children permission to discover and share their own passions.

### Expand on what your children are telling you.

Use what your children are talking about as a conversation-builder. If someone mentions that it's foggy outside, tell them that fog is just clouds that are really close to the ground and that even though you can't see the sun, it is still there. You can then ask your children what they think will make the fog go away. After they respond, give a brief explanation of what really happens (this is a good opportunity to throw in a new vocabulary word like "dissipate"). All the details of this little weather lesson may not stick, but the next time your child talks about fog (for example, when doing the daily weather calendar in school), they will gain a better understanding since it won't be a completely new subject for them. And who knows—maybe it will awaken the little meteorologist within!

**Whenever possible, praise your children's decision-making,** even if what they're deciding isn't what you'd necessarily do (within reason, of course, and never agree with anything that

would do harm). This is a great way to reinforce you are listening to them and encourage them to share their thoughts with you. While in preschool, my twins went through a phase of dressing in all one color: red means Superman; brown means Indiana Jones. One evening while picking out school clothes for the next day, one twin said, "I'm going to be brown tomorrow." After a moment of reflection I replied, "That sounds like a really good idea to me." As long as it fit and was seasonally-appropriate, I was on Cloud Nine he could dress himself! I responded to him in such a way that 1) he knew I had heard him, 2) I took his decision seriously, and, 3) after thoughtful (albeit brief) consideration, I concurred that, indeed, dressing in all brown clothes was a exemplary idea. The look of satisfaction and confidence on his face was worth the small effort it took on my part.

**Keep it upbeat.** You will not only convey the idea that communicating and interacting with others is an enjoyable experience, it will help you maintain your own mood throughout the day. Being a parent is the hardest, most rewarding job you'll ever have, with aspects that are downright drudgery (insert "doing laundry" here). When I'm having an off day, reaching down inside myself to create a little enthusiasm as I talk to my children helps me regain my footing and reminds me that even though what I'm saying isn't news to me, it is to my children and therefore, interesting to them and possibly even—dare I say it—exciting.

As parents, every day we have opportunities to teach and encourage our children to express themselves verbally, as well as learn how to be good listeners. Open and easy conversation lets your children know they can talk to you about themselves and their lives, laying the foundation for good communication throughout your relationship. With the right attitude on your part, conversing with your children—no matter what the age—can be a fun and rewarding experience for everyone. ♥



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by Christina Baglivi Tinglof

# Why PRESCHOOL is Important for Your Multiples

When I was a member of my local twins group, the September meeting was always festive for that was the month that we would announce which twins and triplets had headed off to preschool for the first time. As the names of the lucky moms and her children were read aloud, shouts of joy and applause erupted from the audience.

**Christina Baglivi Tinglof** is the creator and editor of *Talk About Twins* (<http://www.talk-about-twins.com>), a website devoted to parenting twins. She's also the author of several books on twins including *Double Duty 2e*, and *Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples*. This mother of three boys including fraternal twins lives with her husband in Los Angeles. You can read her blog at <http://christinabaglivitinglof.com>.

Indeed, the first day of preschool is an important rite of passage for many harried moms of multiples but the experience is even more valuable for their young twins and triplets by allowing them to engage with other children. "Some multiples cling to their sibling, not knowing how to branch off into new relationships," explains Melissa Mullin, Ph.D., blogger (<http://www.bitsofwisdomforall.com>) and director of the K&M Center in Santa Monica, Calif. (<http://www.kandmcenter.com>), a learning center which specializes in remediating learning differences in children. "Preschool gives both twins the opportunity to make new relationships while still staying close to each other."

April Adams of Taylor, Mich. can relate. "My three-year-old fraternal twin girls, Brooke and Hailey, are super shy," she says. Eager for her daughters

to learn how to socialize with others as well as become more independent of each other before they hit kindergarten, Adams enrolled them in preschool. During the first two weeks of school they wouldn't even talk to the teachers or the other children! But lately, Adams has seen a marked improvement in their social skills, playing and talking it up with their classmates. "They have grown so much in the past two months," she says.

While many parents of multiples believe they can provide a rich learning environment at home, they shouldn't dismiss the benefits of preschool. "When twins play together at home, they tend to instinctively know each other's needs, likes and dislikes," says Eve-Marie Arce, Ed.D., past president of California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) and author of *Twins and Supertwins: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals*. But enrolling them in preschool, she explains, expands their opportunity to learn about other children. "In today's world, problem solving through peer interaction is very important in succeeding in kindergarten, first and second grades."

## LEARNING THE BASICS

Not only is preschool the perfect environment for multiples to make new friends outside of the twinship but a quality classroom setting also helps facilitate future learning. "It's important not to confuse preschool academics with reading, writing, and math skills,"

adds Dr. Mullin. "Rather, preschool gives children the opportunity to develop the underlying skills needed for future academics." For instance, coloring or playing in the sandbox helps to build fine motor skills, perfect for the art of writing. Learning to sit quietly and following directions is a precursor to reading. Building with blocks and climbing on play equipment promotes spatial skills, a forerunner to mastering math, while free play activities and negotiating with others is important for organization or executive functioning skills.

## PRESCHOOL'S ROLE IN SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

Since multiples experience speech delay more often than singleton children of the same age with boys at an even greater risk than girls, the preschool experience takes on added importance for twins and triplets as it gives them ample opportunity to practice language.

"Multiples acquire language together," explains Dr. Arce. "Because of it, they often imitate each other's immature speech." Plus, multiples have to share parental attention. "They just have less direct communication with Mom and Dad." When one twin asks for a glass of milk, for example, Mom or Dad usually gives it to both children rather than allowing the second child to request her own. Their comprehension—their ability to understand—may be advanced but multiples are a



crafty bunch and may work efficiently by completing each other's sentences thereby cutting down on each individual's verbal practice. All of these factors—imitating immature speech, less parental attention and speaking for the other—can compound speech problems, impacting their ability to learn to read further down the road.

Jenna Pruner enrolled her identical twins daughters, Rae and Joy, in preschool at age three due to their severe language delay. "They were not saying any words at all, and had a primitive twin language that was a series of grunts and gestures," says the mom from Calgary, Canada. It paid off. By the time they got to kindergarten two years later the girls were on target in both vocabulary and expressive language. "Our preschool experience was important for my girls' language and social interaction and for my development as their advocate."

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION

Preschool removes many of the language and social obstacles that multiples experience at home but it can also bring to light other potential problems allowing for early intervention. For instance, after Melisa Miner enrolled her fraternal twin boys, Aaron and Brandon, in a local preschool for socialization and introduction to academics, the Morgan Hill, Calif. mom noticed that one of her sons couldn't easily adapt to the school environment. "His social behavior was very different from the other children," she says. It was this observation that led to having her son tested. The diagnoses came back as high-functioning autistic. Aggressive interven-

tion followed, and now in third grade, Miner's son is doing very well. Without preschool, she says, kindergarten would have been a much more challenging experience.


Kellie Asaro had a similar situation with her identical twin sons, Salvatore and Santino, when at age 30 months she noticed that their speech wasn't on target for their age. "They were using some single syllable words, counting, and saying ABC's, but strangely, still no 'mama' or 'dada' or full sentences," says the Carmel, Calif. mom and owner of Trends in Twos (<http://www.trendsintwos.com>), an online boutique for families of multiples. Furthermore, though her boys were happy kids who loved to play with the family, they never interacted with each other in a meaningful way. "They just seemed a bit off, like they weren't where they should be socially as well as verbally."

On advice from her pediatrician, Asaro enrolled her twins in a special preschool program through her local school district

where they were diagnosed with a mild form of autism. After three years of special education classes, the boys' progress has been enormous and they're on target to attend a regular first-grade classroom next year. "They're speaking pretty much like other kids in their age group, and have a much easier time transitioning into new schedules and situations," says Asaro. "The best part has been their interaction with each other. I think as a parent, you dream of your twins being the best of friends, sharing a special bond. My boys didn't seem to express that until just recently. Now they're constant playmates."

## PEACE AND QUIET

Even if your multiples have no special issues, if you're an overworked stay-at-home Mom, you can still reap the benefits of preschool. Just ask Courtney Ballinger. The Los Angeles, Calif. mom enrolled her fraternal twin daughters in school, Sophie and Emily, for a variety of reasons. "I believe that a good preschool helps any child with social, emotion, cognitive and physical abilities," she explains. Yet her biggest consideration was something else. "I just needed a break!"

You won't get an argument here. 





# A LONG *List* OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GETTING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT CELEBRITY TEENAGE TWINS PEYTON & SPENCER LIST!







Peyton and Spencer List are 14-year-old twins who have both starred in a variety of TV/Movie projects and have already achieved a long list of accomplishments in their young lives. These twins have been

acting since a very young age and with their talent and experience, will both be in the entertainment industry for many years to come. They split their time living between Los Angeles and New York and they also have a younger brother and two pets their family rescued - a Shih Tzu dog, Windsor and cat, Luna.

We were excited to be able to interview these two dynamic teens and learn more about them...

**TWINS: Please tell us your age and birthday...**

We just turned 14 this month and were born on April 6, 1998

**TWINS: Where did you grow up and where do you live now?**

We both grew up in NYC and are now living in LA.

**TWINS: What is the best thing about being a twin?**

We always have someone to talk to! When we were little we didn't get along so well, but now we are like best friends!! :D

**TWINS: What is the worst thing about being a twin?**

I don't see any disadvantages really.

**TWINS: Do people know you are a twin? What's that like when they find out?**

Some people guess since we are similar heights and some people say we look similar (although I don't see it hehe)

**TWINS: Do you ever feel like you are in competition with one another? If so, can you provide an example and how do you handle it?**

I feel like we are really competitive in EVERYTHING even though we were different genders. Whether its board games, sports, or just who gets the bathroom first!!

**TWINS: Have you ever been in the same classroom in school?**

Once before in preschool... we don't remember it but my mom said it was really hard because I (Peyton) would come back from school and tell my mom all the bad things that Spencer did! It made her crazy!!

**TWINS: Do you have a funny twin story to share?**

The other day Spencer was singing and I was singing and we realized it was the same song!! Also we ALWAYS have to go to the bathroom at the same time... which can get annoying!!

**TWINS: Do you have any advice you would want to share with other twins?**

Don't think of being a twin as a punishment having to share a birthday with them and a lot of other things, but think of it as someone who you can talk to about anything and as a best friend! Sure you'll have your ups and downs, but make the best of it! :D

**TWINS: So far, what has been your most memorable birthday celebration you both have had?**

Our 11th birthday party was so fun! We went to a house in our neighborhood that was supposedly "haunted" we were all really scared walking up and then when we went up to the door a man in all black jumped out and freaked us out. Turns out it was our uncle he scared us all sooo much!! We then followed that up by having Mani/Pedis for the girls.

**TWINS: At what age did you both begin acting?**

When we were 4

**TWINS: Do you see yourself doing anything other than acting/entertaining? If so, what would you like to do later in life?**

Spencer: I love the Camera & writing my own material.

Peyton: I see myself maybe writing/directing one day.

**TWINS: How do you handle being recognized in public?**

It's fun to meet all of my fans in person and see what they like about the show and what we all do on it. Spencer likes the girls.

**TWINS: What do you both do for fun when not working and what are your hobbies?**

Spencer: I love to play basketball. I can play all day and it feels like not even an hour has passed!!

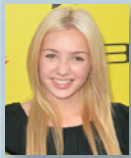
Peyton: I love to do track & Field! I do this program called "Girls on the Run" it's a lot of fun and I get to work with some great girls!

**TWINS: What are your upcoming projects you are working on?**

Spencer: Right now I am working on a film called MOCKING-BIRD and I just guest starred on an episode of the TV show, iCarly.

Peyton: I just finished my first season of JESSIE and just shot DI-ARY OF A WIMPY KID 3: DOG DAYS which comes out August 3rd.





# Peyton List...

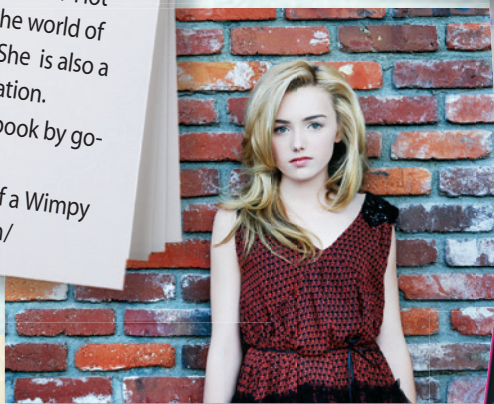
Peyton currently plays the character 'Emma Ross', a bubbly teenager eager to reorder the world as she sees fit and is the only biological child to a high-profile celebrity couple, in the Disney Channel comedy series "JESSIE". Peyton also most recently starred in the comedy "DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: RODRICK RULES" playing the character of 'Holly Hills' and she will be reprising this role in the upcoming third installation in the series, "DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: DOG DAYS" coming out in August.

Peyton's additional feature film credits include Disney's "THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE," opposite Nicolas Cage, "REMEMBER ME" opposite Robert Pattinson and Chris Cooper and "27 DRESSES," opposite Katherine Heigl. Peyton also she also starred opposite Spencer in the indie thriller "BEREAVEMENT." Her small screen credits include Lifetime's original movie, "SECRETS IN THE WALLS" as well as guest starring roles on "GOSSIP GIRL," "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE" "LAW & ORDER: SVU" and "CASHMERE MAFIA."

Peyton was recently handpicked for Red Pages' 2012 U.S. 'Hot 100 list' which predicts the up and coming talent in the world of film, TV, music, fashion, sport, literature and politics. She is also a StarPower Ambassador for Starlight Children's Foundation.

Follow Peyton on Twitter @PeytonList and on Facebook by going to the Peyton List Fan Page...

Check out the new movie trailer for the next Diary of a Wimpy Kid Dog Days: <http://www.diaryofawimpykidmovie.com/>





# Spencer List...



Spencer stars as the title role in Famke Janssen's directorial debut "BRINGING UP BOBBY" in which he co-stars opposite Milla Jovovich, Bill Pullman and Marcia Cross. He also co-starred in the indie horror "FORECLOSURE", opposite Michael Imperioli and Wendell Pierce, and starred opposite Peyton in the indie horror thriller "BEREAVEMENT." Up next for Spencer will be a lead role in the up and coming film 'SPAZ.' On the small screen, Spencer has guest-starred on such hit series as CBS' CSI: MIAMI, 20th Century Fox's FRINGE, and Nickelodeon's 'iCarly', NBC's LAW & ORDER: SVU, SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE and ABC's ONE LIFE TO LIVE.

Follow Spencer on Twitter @SpencerList and on Facebook by going to the Spencer List Fan Page...





# 10 Tips

by Cara Krenn

## for Flying with Twin Babies

**Cara Krenn** lives in San Diego with her husband Jim and fraternal twin girls Caroline and Kelly. A freelance writer, editor and stay-at-home mom, she blogs about her adventures at [www.twinthusiasm.com](http://www.twinthusiasm.com).

The holidays have come and gone and I'm delighted to say that my husband and I survived our first cross country trip with our eight-month-old twin girls. I was anxious about flying from San Diego to Minnesota for Christmas but found that with the right preparation and a pinch of luck, flying with twin babies was better than expected! Here are a few tips that may help you prepare for traveling with your twins.

**1. Get to the airport early.** When traveling with children, airlines recommend that you arrive to the airport even earlier than you normally would, and there's a reason. It takes longer to check in, get through security and prepare to board the plane. Help ease any stress by ensuring your family is there with time to spare.

**2. For twins (or any two lap children), be prepared *not* to sit next to your spouse.**

If you're seated in a three

seat row, there are only four oxygen masks in the overhead drop-down compartment. So, on a full flight, you will not be seated next to your partner if you're both carrying a lap child, as there are not enough oxygen masks in one row for five people. Ask to be seated across from each other in an aisle seat. This worked out great for us as we were able to pass toys, books, (and babies!) to one another.

**3. Bring backups of everything.** Make sure your diaper bag is well stocked with extra diapers, wipes, pacifiers, toys, and outfits. Murphy's Law guarantees that your babies will drop their pacifiers on the dirty floor, wet their outfits (as one of our daughters did on the plane), or blow through extra diapers. Your diaper bag may be heavy, but a well-equipped one is worth its weight!

**4. Bring a new toy.** Along with a few "tried and true" toys, we brought some new ones to up the entertainment novelty factor during our flights.

**5. Give your babies a bottle during takeoff and landing.** Your twin babies do not yet know how to pop their ears to alleviate airplane pressure. Giving them a bottle during takeoff and landing



will help prevent ear pain and crying. We used ready-to-feed formula bottles that required no mixing or preparation.

**6. If breastfeeding, practice feeding in public.** Even though our girls were eight months old, I had never breastfed in a public venue. I normally feed them tandem, but obviously needed to feed them individually at the airport and on the plane. It was helpful to practice with a blanket over their bodies in advance to ensure privacy when on our trip.

**7. Prepare for a germaphobe's nightmare.** There's no way around it; the airport is full of germs. We brought along disposable diaper changing pads to place over the restroom changing tables as well as plenty of hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes to clean the airplane arm rests, tray tables, seatbelts and other areas our girls would touch on the plane. Of course, there's no way to prevent your twins from encountering germs, so cross your fingers and remind yourself that their immune systems are becoming more resilient.

**8. Feel free to be firm with strangers.** I was surprised by how many people touched our babies' hands and faces without asking, especially when standing in the airplane aisle. I'm always flattered by people's attention and praise of our twins, however I'm also comfortable asking people not to touch them. A kind way of saying this is "Oh, she's recovering from a cold and I wouldn't want you to catch it." Go with your own comfort level on this and never feel obligated to let a stranger touch your child.

**9. Let the flight attendants help you.** If you need an extra hand getting on the plane, arranging your luggage, or simply want a glass of water, ask the flight attendants to help you. The staff on our flights was delightfully pleasant and understanding.

**10. Try not to stress.** Even if your babies cry, remember that the flight is only a few hours out of your (and your fellow passengers') lives. People are generally very nice – we were all babies once after all – and will likely enjoy seeing your darling twins.



Wishing you and your twins happy and safe travels! ♥



# TAKING YOUNG TWINS TO DISNEYWORLD IT'S ALL IN THE PLANNING

**m**y wife Lisa told me a story about the last time she had been to Disney World as a young adult in the early nineties. She told her father at the time, "The next time I come back here, I'm coming here with my kids." Little did she know, it would be with nearly four year old twins. As for me, I had not been to Orlando's Disney World since I was a teenager in 1982. Epcot had just opened, and there was no Animal Kingdom or Hollywood Studios at the time. But both my wife and I wanted to take our twins, Joshua and Abigail, about to turn four at the time, at a young age but not too young as to not remember anything or appreciate it.

It is one thing to plan to take young children, but as multiple parents know, twins or other multiples always provide their unique challenges that don't always apply with different aged siblings, so planning for Disney World had its own series of questions to be answered. Hopefully, my research, discussions, decisions, and experiences will help answer some of your questions and assist you in better planning your trip, should you decide to go. One thing is for certain, you do need

to plan for Disney World. Just showing up and hoping to enjoy one's self fully doesn't really work, with so many options, and limited time and resources.

## GUIDEBOOKS AND WEBSITES

There are many invaluable guidebooks and much of the information was garnered from the ones that I read. I started by checking out a few from the library to see which ones were the most helpful. You won't usually find one for the current year, but try to find one as recent as possible. Most of the information will not change, and you can choose to purchase any that you find will be useful, both in your planning, and to take to the parks. The guidebooks explain all the attractions in detail, including what rides might scare young ones; suggestions for renting or bringing strollers; hotel information and recommendations for both inside and outside Disneyworld; and restaurant information, including character meals.

In my opinion, the one guide that is the best for pre-planning is The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World by Bob



Sehlinger and Len Testa. It has over 800 pages of information on everything related to Disney World (and even a chapter on Universal Studios as well). The best thing about this book is that they include quotes from actual families so you get an idea of what people like yourself experienced. The best book for the parks is *The Passporter's Guide to Walt Disney World* by Jennifer, Dave, and Allison C. Marx. It includes fold out maps, planning sheets, and pockets to hold information, tickets, etc.

There are many great websites with information including [allears.com](http://allears.com). Websites such as this give important information such as restaurant menus so you know whether or not there is a kids menu, and what the choices are. My son Josh does not like pizza with sauce on it, and usually wants a grilled cheese or peanut butter sandwich. [Allears.com](http://allears.com) gave us great information including the prices. The last website I want to mention is [tripadvisor.com](http://tripadvisor.com). This website provides user's reviews on hotels, restaurants and attractions, and ranks them based on how people rated them. We chose the Holiday Inn in Walt Disney World in large part due to the reviews on [tripadvisor.com](http://tripadvisor.com). Everything they said in the reviews was correct including how nice the rooms and pool were, the high level of service, and the frequency and punctuality of the shuttle to the parks.

## TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

As we got closer to the actual trip we had a few burning questions regarding our twins. This would be their first trip on a plane and we wanted to make sure their time was occupied. At the same time we wondered whether car seats were feasible or necessary for the plane trip. In our case, because we were staying in WDW and were not renting a car, we did not have need for them. We also had our seats professionally installed and did not really want to take them out. We solved the first question through buying a couple of "travel" games and a portable DVD player with two headphones so they could watch together. On the plane, Abby and Josh watched the seatback TV, but in the airport they were able to watch the DVDs we



brought to amuse them. This was also useful for some quiet time after a long day in the park back in the hotel room.

Two huge questions, whether you have multiples or not, are how are you getting to Orlando and where are you staying? We were flying and since our focus was entirely on Disney World, and we were staying at a hotel on the grounds, we did not need a car. However, we did need to get to and from Orlando International Airport. Through my research I discovered town car service. It works like a limousine, except that they meet you at the baggage area, help bring your bags to the car and even provide car seats. However, I did not know that I had to install the car seats, myself and they

were not very good ones at that. One of the best aspects was the fact that we could stop at a grocery store on the way to the hotel and buy drinks and snacks for the week, such as bottled water (which is expensive in WDW). My wife had already packed some snacks because, while security does check all bags entering the parks, they turn a blind eye to food and drinks. So there is me at the grocery store, dressed in my Canadian winter jeans and sweatshirt in the Florida heat.

If you actually stay at a Disney Resort, you can use their Magic Express bus service for free. But keep in



mind that it has mixed reviews and many reviewers said they waited hours to get their luggage at the hotel. On the way back to the airport, we decided to use a Mears shuttle, which was cheaper and quicker, and we didn't need the car seats. Another option, of course, is to stay off the grounds in either a suite hotel or a rental condominium. With multiples, having extra room is always great, but you would definitely need a car, as most of the outside hotel shuttles to WDW are very infrequent. Also, you might want a kitchen or kitchenette to be able to save some money on meals, which are expensive in the parks.

## STROLLER OR NOT?

The question on whether to use a stroller for multiples in Disney World is really based on a number of factors. But for us, it came down to the fact that our nearly four year old twins did not like being in a stroller anymore. We have an amazing double stroller, the Mountain Buggy Urban, and we put it to great use until they were about three. We also have a couple of umbrella strollers for convenience sake. However, Josh and Abby like to walk everywhere, including a mile long hike in Algonquin Park this past summer.

We knew they wouldn't get in the umbrella strollers and we

weren't planning on schlepping the Mountain Buggy on the plane.

We also knew that the shuttle bus came right to the front door of our hotel and it is hard to get strollers on these buses. In some very large Disney resorts, they recommend a stroller just to get to and from the bus stop. We decided that we would take our chances on day one and rent a double stroller from WDW if we needed it. We didn't. The kids did just fine! Double strollers rent for about \$33 US a day (slightly less if you buy multiple days) and they all look the same. Also, some areas can't be accessed with them and Disney cast members move them all the time. You have to mark your stroller with something easily identifiable such as a handkerchief or risk losing it.

## AT THE PARKS

After the stroller, our two other concerns were with Josh and the washroom and planning for the rides. Josh had just become consistent at being accident free without pull up diapers and letting us know when he had to go to the washroom. However, at Disney World we were concerned that there might not always be a washroom available, especially during a wait in line. We debated having him wear pull-





ups at the parks but decided against it because we thought it might be a big step backwards. Our decision turned out fine! Josh had only one small accident on the last day and was great about going to the washroom during breaks and before getting on to the monorail.

The guides were great help in planning for the rides, both suggesting which ones to focus on, which ones have Fast Passes, and which might have a scare factor. The Fast Pass system at WDW is excellent. You use your entry ticket to obtain a pass to come back at a specific hour block of time and move to the front of the cue. However, a colleague correctly told me that you can always come after the time allotment, just not before. This was proven at Kilimanjaro Safari in Animal Kingdom, when we got there twenty minutes late and still got to use our Fast Passes. Another great feature for parents of multiples is the parent switching off option. Let's say only one of you wants to go on a ride, but both kids want to. Both parents line up, but at the front the first parent gets on with the first child, and the second parent waits at the front with the second child. Then when the ride is over, the kids switch places, and the second child gets to ride with the parent.

Here is one last important piece of advice. Make sure you follow your kids' ride wish list first, especially if the ride does not have a Fast Pass option. However,

a mistake could create some Disney "magic" as it did for us on the first day. Josh wanted to go on the Indy Car Racetrack ride in the Magic Kingdom, but it was lunch time. We told him to wait until after lunch, but when we went over to the ride, there was an hour or so wait. He was beginning to break down and would not have lasted in the line up. My wife walked up to the nearest cast member and asked if the line would get shorter eventually. After being told it would be at least another couple of hours, we decided to try to come back later. It was then that the cast member asked us, "How many people do you have?" My wife answered four and he immediately led us through a gate to the very front of the line! It was a magical moment we will never forget and it saved the day for us and our son.

Taking our young twins to Disney World had its share of challenges, but in the end it was well worth all the planning. If you go, here's hoping you create as many great memories as we did. ♥

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**Steven Jeffries** is a Canadian elementary school teacher. He is the husband to Lisa, and father to five-year-old twins, Abigail and Joshua. Steven enjoys planning family vacations, but Walt Disney World is his all time favorite!

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by Jennifer Nelson

# What Our Parents Did Right

When I was a little girl, I embraced it. I loved all things pink and frilly, read Saddle Club books like they were going out of style, and chose my outfits as if I were creating works of art. When I wanted to create, I wrote. When I wanted to help, I cleaned house with Mom. My twin, Robin, did none of those things. Robin was a tomboy (and a male; he started living as a man in his early 20s, and felt like a male long before then). Robin wanted to be outside, getting dirty, riding bikes with the other kids on the block. Robin's creativity came out both in cartoony drawings and in the kitchen.

always combed, and even encouraged me to wear makeup. He had a sweetness with me that he didn't have with either of his other kids. Robin, on the other hand, was Dad's buddy. They worked on cars together



**Jennifer Nelson** is a freelance writer, a mother, and a twin. She blogs at *My Daughter Is Funnier than Me*, <http://funnierthanme.wordpress.com>.

Like most twins, we spent most of the time together. We were a unit. And since we looked so much alike as kids, it was very easy to lump the two of us together into one identity. The rest of the world may have seen us as one, but to Mom and Dad, Robin was Robin and Jen was Jen. They knew which clothes belonged

only to Robin, and which belonged only to me. They knew that Robin was completely indifferent to my Barbie soap operas, and that I'd rather have a long chat with Mom before dinner than cruise around the neighborhood on my bike.

For Christmas, I'd always get more presents. I loved trinkets. I loved clothes and dolls and jewelry. I loved cute, tiny little toys. And so, I got many little things. Robin's presents were fewer but bigger: Art sets with hundreds of colors, remote control cars, and video games.

Mom and Dad spoke to us differently. Mom, Robin, our little brother Danny, and I had dinner together every night. When Mom had a story about her coworkers' crushes or outrageous outfits, she'd tell me. When she had a story about something cute the cat had done or the jets from the air force base flying over, she'd tell Robin. Of course we'd both hear and both answer, but being addressed by name with a story interesting to me always cheered me up.

The difference between Robin and I was very obvious when we were at our dad's house. I was his princess. He bought me fancy dresses, made sure my hair was





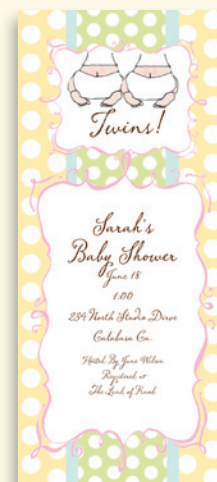
er. They talked politics and business. When he had work to do on the weekends, he'd take Robin with him to be an extra set of hands. And as he was dying of cancer, he only spoke frankly and realistically to Robin. He told the rest of us that everything would be okay.

Our parents did not treat us equally. They treated us fairly and lovingly, and that meant sometimes Robin got the last serving of dessert or I got more presents for my birthday. It meant that when Mom took me to the mall and left Robin home to play on the rope swing with the boys at the end of the block, each of us thought we were getting the better deal. It meant that Mom would volunteer Robin to cook during Thanksgiving, and would give me cash advances for housework instead of requiring that I finish the work first, since she knew it would be up to snuff. Mom and Dad took the time to get to know us, and the care to treat each of us as an individual. ♥



*Twins in the News continued from page 5*

and bands of blue will keep guests guessing and leave things open-ended for the parents who have chosen not to find out (or share) the sex of their babies. Two adorable, diapered baby bottoms top off this invitation. The suggested retail price for a box of ten hand-glittered invitations is \$19.00, \$17.00 without glitter. Cards are also available in bulk upon request.



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*A Word from Dad continued from page 9*

9. Have a night out whenever possible. You always have to pause for the cause. A person can only take so much before they become no good to themselves or those they have to care for. Get a sitter, pay them extra, apologize in advance, and run out the door as quickly as you can.
10. Have fun. I can't tell you how many times I've just looked at my twins and thought how lucky I was to have two at the same time. Despite your best efforts, they will still drain you emotionally and physically. But you have to enjoy your time with them because that's what it's all about. ♥

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# Unexplained Differences

by Collette Massey

My twins Michael and Lucy are sixteen now: typical teenagers in many ways, they certainly keep me on my toes! But it hasn't always been easy and that's because they came along almost three months early, back in 1995, weighing only 2 lbs 10oz and 2 lbs 12oz respectively. In many ways their story is nothing extraordinary by today's standards where babies are surviving at an earlier and earlier stage weighing less and less – the wonder of modern science and medicine. But there is one big difference between Michael and Lucy, a lasting legacy of their premature birth and that is Michael's profound deafness.

I have always been able to accept Michael's hearing loss. Unlike a lot of parents who have a child with a severe or profound hearing loss I didn't go through a grieving process or rage and think why me, why my child? The reason for this was simple: I feared it was going to be so much worse. I feared he was going to be profoundly disabled, physically and mentally in so many ways; therefore, to discover that he "only" had a hearing loss was always a big relief.

I was a young first time mum of 25 when my twins came along. My husband Roy and I had been married 3 years and we longed for babies but the pregnancy had been fraught with difficulties from the onset. I bled continuously until 18 weeks and at 14 weeks I had what the hospital termed a threatened abortion - I nearly lost one twin, but I managed to hang on in there until 29 weeks when I caught gastroenteritis and went into a premature labor. I was rushed to hospital in Belfast, not far from our County Antrim home where everything was done to delay labour but unfortunately my heart couldn't cope with the strong medication necessary and I had to come off the drip. Nature then took its course and the babies arrived a couple of days later. I had a natural birth with an epidural and Michael arrived first followed 5 minutes later by Lucy. At this stage, I have to say ignorance really is bliss; I had no knowledge of the heartache to follow . . .

Lucy from the start was a fighter and a survivor. She left the hospital after a couple of weeks and thrived. Michael, on the other hand, remained in hospital for three months and strug-



gled. Bleeds from the brain, pneumonia, a collapsed lung not to mention my greatest fear: cerebral palsy. I had to face all of this and my husband and I were only 24 and 25, we hadn't thought about anyone much apart from ourselves our whole lives. Nothing could have prepared us for the drastic changes but human beings are resourceful and adaptable and that is what we did: we just got through it, and struggled on each day.

I never wanted Michael home from hospital until he had been given the all clear so to speak. I wanted to be reassured that everything was normal; that he was normal, but no paediatrician could give me that assurance. No one knew, the only thing we discovered for certainty was that Michael had a hearing loss. At a year old I received a further blow: I was informed by a consultant paediatric neurologist that he had cerebral palsy. My world fell apart. Lucy, at a year old crawled over to me and tried to climb up on my lap just as the doctor was telling us and I literally pushed her away. I couldn't bear anyone touching me; the pain was a literal agony. No one could tell me whether my son would ever be able to walk. And so I entered a world involving physiotherapists, occupational therapists, teachers of the deaf, speech therapists and countless hospital visits. I distinctly remember the physiotherapist warning me to be careful and not forget about Lucy – in my eyes she was my healthy, able twin and when people came to the house to help Michael I got into the habit of putting her into a playpen. She used to hold onto the bars and look out, watching everyone fussing over Michael. I had to keep her in there or else she would do all the things that everyone was trying to get Michael to do. What should I have done? I feel so guilty now when I think of the extra attention Michael always got, but at the time the worry and stress over him was so bad I would have done anything to help him. Unfortunately that meant his twin got left out – it's painful realizing that. I suppose if I'm honest I realized it at the time but I had to help him and hindsight is a wonderful thing. One thing I learned from this time (and it has been of benefit to me in later years in my role of as an English Teacher) is not to label a child too early. The



agony of that diagnosis of cerebral palsy was unfounded. Today Michael can walk, run, swim and ride a bike as well as the next person. Yes, it took him longer to learn to walk than other babies. Yes, he crawled only using the left hand side of his body – but he overcame those difficulties - he was very lucky.

Another added joy was the addition of another baby, Emma, eighteen months after the birth of my twins. I was definitely busy during their early years and it became the girls and Michael. Michael was deemed suitable for a cochlear implant at aged 5 and a whole new world of sound was opened up to him with this wonderful invention. He still needed additional help and after playgroup and nursery a school had to be found that could cope with Michael's hearing loss. So he was separated from his twin and it has stayed that way. He was collected in either a bus or taxi and taken to a school in Belfast which had a Partial Hearing Unit while Lucy and Emma attended the local primary school. So my twins have always had that physical distance between them caused by their premature birth because that is the reason for Michael's hearing loss. At 13 my husband and I had to make the decision to send Michael to board at Mary Hare School in

Berkshire, England across the water from our home in Ireland. He was deemed a bright grammar school child and there was no school suitable for his educational needs at home in Ireland. It was heartbreaking but definitely the right decision and he is happy there, thriving with good friends. He enjoys coming home for the holidays and a closeness exists between all three of my children partly I suppose because they are all so close in age. Having twins was a life changing experience for me. Nothing has ever been the same since or will be again. I love all three of my children with all my heart – just as they are.

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**Collette Massey** *Is an English Teacher, part-time writer and mother of twins born prematurely 16 years ago.*

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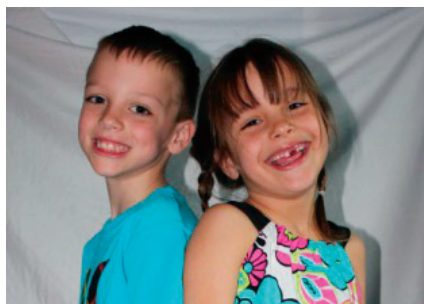


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**10** Hudson & Brewer  
Age 2 • ID  
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**11** Jeremiah & James  
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Age 5 months • FR  
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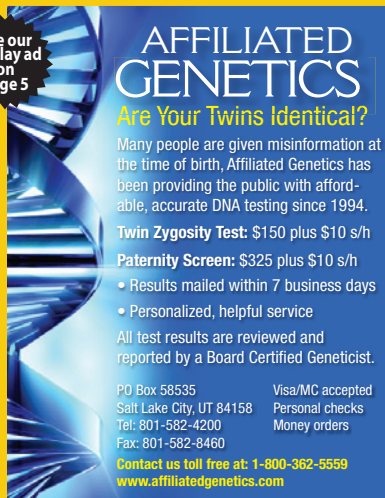


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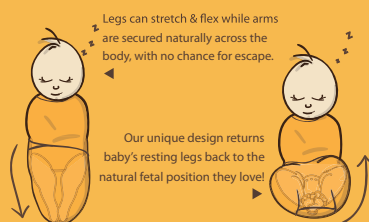
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by Miriam Salerno

# Mealtime Mayhem

## A Play in One Act

Few things inspire me to practice the art of zen parenting more than meal times. The anxiety of feeding my kids is comparable to a job interview (or one of those dreams when you have to take an exam for a class that you didn't even know you registered for... everyone has those, right?). You just don't know what kind of curve ball they are going to throw at you and you need be prepared for every scenario:

- How many condiments will my daughter want? Do I have them in stock?
- Will my son insist I peel a traditionally non-peeled food (example: hotdog!)?
- Do I have the "right" kind of grape juice?
- Will someone suddenly crave pineapple?
- Will they stage a full-on "no chicken soup" revolt?
- Will I have the strength to stand my ground and NOT give in???

It is so stressful sometimes that I actually find myself fantasizing about living in a world where we are so poor that all we have for dinner is boiled potatoes...

Like it or not, you gotta eat it, kid. Or starve. Gosh, how simple and luxurious life would be!

**Mom:** Dinner time, children! (*kids eagerly put away their one wooden toy and enter the kitchen*)

**Kids:** What's for dinner, mother? (*wide-eyed and smiling*)

**Mom:** Boiled potatoes, again. (*shakes head disappointedly*) Oh, children, how I wish we could afford something more interesting to offer you (*lying through her teeth*).

**Kids:** Oh mother, we don't care. We are so hungry and we are so grateful for these delicious boiled potatoes. (*eat boiled potatoes, all of them.*)

**Mom:** Thank you for being the best children in the whole world (*hugs chil-*

*dren. smiles to herself and thanks god for small miracles and for the dark chocolate-covered almonds that she's hidden in the old porridge pot for post-bedtime snack*)

But, alas, this is just a fantasy. And my kids are presented daily with well-balanced, wholesome meals...that they don't eat. Ever.

To illustrate, I've prepared a short vignette of what often happens in my house at dinner:

(*Opening scene: Dad still at work. Kids, both four years old, in the playroom. Mom, feeling brain dead and exhausted after a*

*long day, is about to prepare dinner. She stands in front of fridge and waits for inspiration. When none comes, she makes chicken, broccoli, and brown rice*

*- simple, inoffensive, edible.*)

**Mom:** Hey kids, two minute warning until dinner!

**Girl and Boy:** NO WE ARE STILL PLAYING!!!

**Mom:** I told you ten minutes ago that dinner was almost ready. Now please clean up and wash your hands.

**Girl:** Okay, mommy. (*girl puts away toys. goes to wash hands. mom rejoices in one small victory*)

**Boy:** No. (*continues slaying imaginary pirates*)

**Girl:** (*comes to table and sees plated food*) I don't want these foods.

**Mom:** Well, this is what I made. And I know you like chicken, broccoli and rice. I've seen you eat it.

**Girl:** Well, I'm ONLY going to eat the rice. I am NOT going to eat the chicken or the broccoli.

**Mom:** Just sit down. (*to boy child*) GET OVER HERE AND WASH YOUR HANDS.

**Boy:** No. I'm not hungry! I want to watch TV! (*he turns on the TV. mom curses to herself. prepares for blowout.*)



[I see here that you cut off crusts. Tsk tsk.](#)



Bread and cabbage! You don't know how good you had it, lady!

**Girl:** I WANT A CHEESE SANDWICH.

**Mom:** (*to girl*) No. Sit. Eat. (*leaves dining room. turns off TV. boy child begins to cry. mom drags boy child into dining room.*)

**Girl:** (*begins to cry*)

**Mom:** (*to girl child*) Why are YOU crying???????

**Girl:** (*sob sob*) I. want. (*sob*) a. cheese. (*sob*) sandwich.

**Mom:** Oh lord. (*boy child now in a fit of rage*). Well, I need to deal with your brother. (*conducts risk/reward analysis of negotiating with girl child.*)

**Girl:** (*crying*)

**Boy:** (*crying*)

**Mom:** (*decides reward > risk.*) (*to girl child*) If you eat all of your broccoli and half of your chicken, I'll make you a cheese sandwich.

**Girl:** NO chicken. Three broccoli. With mustard. (*boy still crying*)

**Mom:** Three bites of chicken and three broccoli. We're out of mustard. (*sh\*t. i knew i forgot something!*).

**Boy:** (*screaming in mom's ear*) I'm not hungry! (*sobbing*) I want to watch TV (*sob sob sob sob sob...ad infinitum*).

**Mom:** (*getting desperate. going deaf*). Four broc-

coli. Two chick-

en? BBQ sauce?  
**Girl:** Okay. But, I want a cheese sandwich AND a cut up apple. No skin.

**Mom:** (*shakes head disappointedly*)

Fine.

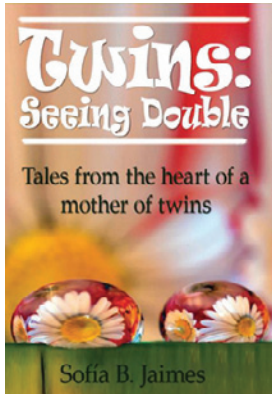
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Now... Wouldn't you dream about boiled potatoes too???



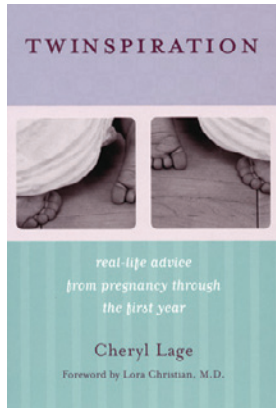
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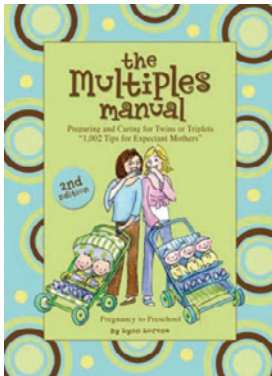
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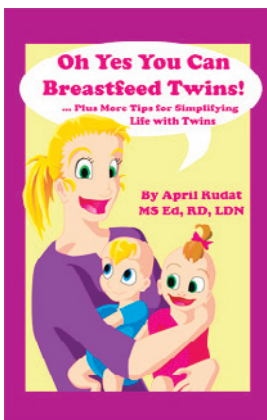
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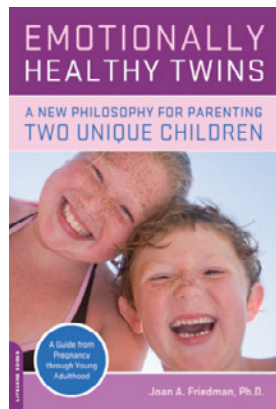
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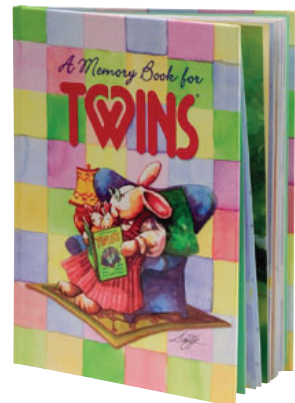
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