

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINSTM

It's Our
Annual Holiday
Gift Guide!

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Tips to Survive
the Season with
Toddler Twins

Get "APPY" this Holiday
Season with some Great
New Apps!

9 Tips on Twin Play
and Toys!



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**Double the Hugs...Double the Kisses...
Double the Love and Holiday Wishes!**

It's the holidays and however you and yours celebrate this joyous season, my advice to all of you is to really try to have fun and be in the moment no matter what those moments bring! No, seriously. It's so easy for us busy, over-worked and over-stressed MOMS to get caught up in all the expectations we put not only on ourselves but those expectations we also feel from others in our life. And, now thanks to Pinterest and the Food Network, we have the extra added pressure and expectations heaped on us to have the absolute most perfect *Martha Stewart*-esk holiday décor, the most perfect and amazing food (*so we can then post it on Facebook*); and of course the absolute most perfect, well-behaved, well-dressed, put together kids you have ever seen on the planet! Right? Well... I say we don't need the added pressure, especially raising multiples!

It's already a tough and challenging job that few we know in our own lives could handle, so why then should we fall for the hype?

I say this year we try and relax and enjoy the hectic and busy times with our kids and let go of the expectation of being "perfect!" This year, let's do our very best to forget the idea of being perfect and get real... You don't have to create the perfect anything... all your kids want is time with you! I know, it sounds weird and maybe even (*dare I say*) old fashioned? But if your family tried for at least one day to reconnect by putting down the smart phones, tablets, mini I-pads, XBOX, DS (*whatevers*) and just do a puzzle or play games with your kids, these will be the memories they will cherish forever. If you take time away from technology for even a day and bake cookies, do crafts, go sledding, sing, laugh and play... this is what they will remember, not the fact that "Oh, mom, that was the Christmas you had streaming gold lace draping our tree and everything matched perfectly," or "That centerpiece in 2013 was amazing!"

So this season, when your kids are screaming and running around the house, bouncing off furniture, fighting, arguing and rolling around... it's important for us to breathe in these moments!



Why, you ask? (*and I know in your mind you are thinking of ways to move through this hectic season as fast as possible so you can get back to your normal structured routines, right?*) Well... don't do it this year!

This year, enjoy and revel in every scream, bounce, laugh and even manic tears that roll down everyone's faces, because these times, my friends, are fleeting... I always tell people it's tough raising four boys (*including twins*) but this is the season of my life right now and the best thing for me to do is take in every moment (*good and bad*) and realize that, this too will pass (*whether I want it to or not!*)

These feelings of stress and the continual run-a-round may be something we even long for some day! The days when our house was full of energy, laughter and love! Soon, your kids will grow up and have families of their own and your life will enter a new season and new memories you will forever cherish. So for now, let go of the idea of trying to be perfect, take a deep breath, wipe the spit-up off your shirt, and face the holidays head-on with cheerfulness, energy and the desire to have fun at all costs!

Speaking of having fun... we are excited to bring you our wildly popular annual Holiday Gift Guide that is jam-packed with so many gift ideas for everyone on your list! Plus, we have some great articles on tips to survive the season and some fun crafts and goodies for you to enjoy. As we look to the start of our 30th year as the premiere parenting magazine and website dedicated to raising twins and higher-order multiples, we are thankful and excited for a future that promises to be very bright!

Here is wishing all of you the happiest and most joyous of seasons from our family to yours...

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa Reed,
Editor-in-Chief

Danae Ostler©2013

Moms of Multiples and Special Needs Children Find Easy Feeding Solution with Baby Dipper

Huntsville, AL -- It's difficult for moms of multiples to feed their children when they only have two hands! The inventive Baby Dipper bowl makes feeding time easier for moms by allowing them to feed children with only one hand. The bowl has several unique features to make self-feeding easier for toddlers and children with special needs. Now moms can feed multiple kids at once or use their free hand to clean up and entertain baby.

Baby Dipper inventor Barbara Schantz is the mom of twin girls and twin boys. Schantz says, "As a stay-at-home mom of twin babies, I faced the daunting task of feeding them. Frustrated with the bowls I had already purchased, I researched and bought other bowls, but still remained disappointed. I needed a truly non-slip baby bowl that required only one hand to successfully feed a baby, but wasn't able to find one on the market that satisfied this need."

That's why Schantz worked hard to create the Baby Dipper bowl, so that other moms can benefit from the one-handed feeding device. The Baby Dipper bowl has also come to the aid of children with special needs or other self-feeding issues and even adults who have a medical need for one-handed feeding.

Parents of multiples and special needs children love the Baby Dipper bowl:

"I also have countless catalogs of adaptive equipment for kids with special needs. I'm actually purging my piles right now. All the feeding systems are basically the same. Not The Baby Dipper. It really is different. It's useful and it does what it claims to do."

"It's rare to find a true "magic bullet" solution to her delays, but the Baby Dipper Bowl was exactly what she needed to increase self-feeding confidence."

"The Baby Dipper bowl helps toddlers, like my twins, learn to feed themselves. The triangular shape, slanted inte-

rior, non-slip base, and transparent sides work together to aid in the collection of the food inside with only one hand."

"This product is fantastic for feeding multiple babies at once, because you truly only need one hand. You don't need to pick up the bowl with your other hand to scrape the sides and get the food onto the spoon, like with traditional bowls."

The Baby Dipper bowl is available online in blue or pink for \$11.99 at www.babydipper.com.

Sealed By Santa—get a response from the big guy!

Kids often write to Santa, but now they can actually get a response to their letter from Santa himself! With the holiday season fast approaching, I thought you might have interest in this fun way to make any kids Christmas. Sealed By Santa sends kids across the nation one-of-a-kind authentic letters right from Santa's workshop, complete with Santa's wax seal! There are 12 different letters to choose from, each personalized just for the special kid in your life. They also come with two free Santa videos from NorthPoleVideos.com and Magical Reindeer Food. If ordered by December 1, the letters will be postmarked from the North Pole! <https://www.sealedbysanta.com/>



UCLA's Fowler Museum will host a Twins Day on Sunday, December 8th at 2:00 PM

In conjunction with the Fowler at Fifty exhibition Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá, the Fowler is presenting a Twins Day on Sunday, Dec 8th at 2 pm. Do you have a twin? Do you wish you did? Bring your twin, sibling, or dress as a twin with a friend. Listen to music by sibling performers, create your own life-size twin, and make a drawing machine that creates double images. Presented in conjunction with "Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yoruba."

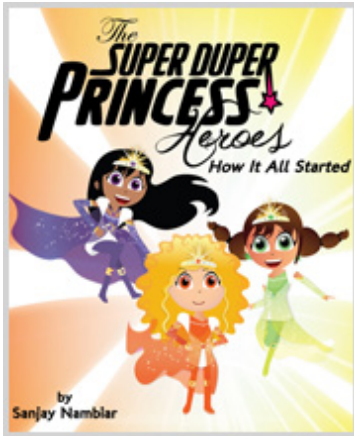
To learn more visit: <http://www.fowler.ucla.edu/events/twin-day>

Father of Twins Writes New Series to help Girls!

Our modern culture is helping girls move forward in countless ways. Why is it, then, that so many of the princesses in children's literature are stuck in 18th century ideals? Well, award-winning author Sanjay Nambiar is about to change that. His new book—"The Super Duper Princess Heroes: How It All Started"—delivers a refreshing perspective that can inspire girls to help change the



world. His inspirations for the book were his identical twin six-year-old daughters. Nambiar saw that the princess stories his girls adored were all about getting married and waiting to be rescued by some prince. As a father who wants to cultivate a better world for his daughters, he created the Super Duper Princess Heroes so



that girls everywhere could have more positive and empowered role models.

Along with the captivating Super Duper Princess Heroes, Nambiar is a wonderful story by himself! The charismatic author grew up in a tough neighborhood in Carson, CA (next to Compton, CA), but got out of that situation by focusing on education. He graduated with honors from U.C.

Berkeley, with degrees in Economics and Neurobiology, earned an M.B.A. from UCLA, and now is a freelance copywriter in Los Angeles.

“The Super Duper Princess Heroes: How It All Started” is about three friends who stumble upon magical tiaras that transform them into princesses with super powers. Whereas typical princess paradigms are all about getting married and looking pretty, this magical book spotlights intelligence, teamwork, and responsibility while maintaining a context of charm and adventure.

In addition to the Super Duper Princess Heroes, Nambiar also is the author of the award-winning *A Little Zen for Little Ones* series. These popular children’s titles provide Zen narratives that explore mindfulness in a contemporary context for today’s culture. Visit www.superduperprincessheroes.com for more information. Also, to view “The Super Duper Princess Heroes” online, please click here:

<http://www.superduperprincessheroes.com/sdph-arc.html>

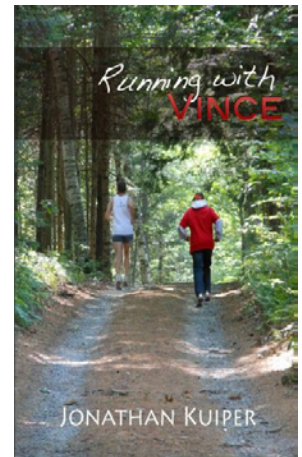
New Book, “Running With Vince” is a heartfelt journey inspired by a Co-Twin’s passing!

Front Royal, VA– Inspired by real events from his twin brother’s passing, Jonathan Kuiper asks what happens when our loved ones die? A book meant for grieving, understanding family relationships, and how to move forward from loss, *Running With Vince* focuses on two brothers and their unique bond.

Polar opposites, Christian and Vincent have little in common, other than their family. On one final road trip together, they bicker and banter, but also better understand each other and the love that they share. More importantly, both are able to move forward and serve those they care for after a tragic family event.

Kuiper uses humor and wit, combined with an understanding of the human spirit that will resonate to your core. He knows that loss is universal but it does not have to be forever. Using the story as parable, Kuiper opens the reader up to the possibility that through love, loss is never permanent and shorter lived than one could imagine.

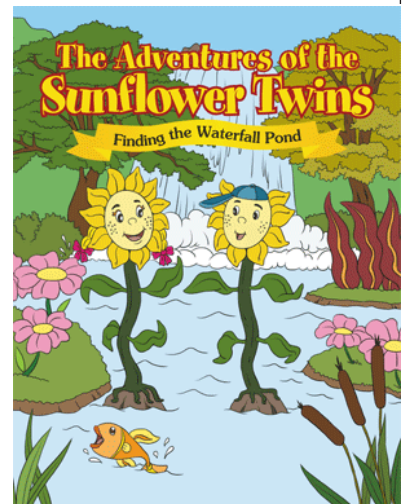
For more information, visit www.jfkwrites.com



Are the Sunflower Twins the next Dora and Boots?

Author uses anthropomorphic flowers to educate children about bullying

LOS ANGELES – Two colorful sunflowers take on their newest adventure in Ozzy Mora’s children’s book, “The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond.” Touching on the issue of bullying and the importance of standing up for yourself and your friends, the book offers valuable lessons for any young reader. Mora’s book tells the unique story of two adventurous sunflowers that are learning about life and the significance of traveling down the correct path. “The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond” is an insightful story that details the journey of two anthropomorphic sunflowers that leave their homes in search of adventure. Mora, looking to share educational life lessons with young readers, designed “The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond” as a resource to try to stop children from bullying one another. “In the book, the sunflower twins leave the comfort of their own homes in search of adventure,” Mora said. “Along the way they must decipher puzzles, decode riddles and stand up to bullies who try to block their path. The story addresses bullying and other issues in a light-hearted way that encourages children to overcome their fears.”



“The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond” is an insightful story that details the journey of two anthropomorphic sunflowers that leave their homes in search of adventure. Mora, looking to share educational life lessons with young readers, designed “The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond” as a resource to try to stop children from bullying one another. “In the book, the sunflower twins leave the comfort of their own homes in search of adventure,” Mora said. “Along the way they must decipher puzzles, decode riddles and stand up to bullies who try to block their path. The story addresses bullying and other issues in a light-hearted way that encourages children to overcome their fears.”

“The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: Finding the Waterfall Pond” is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Xlibris. Ozzy Mora writes children’s books in the hopes of entertaining and

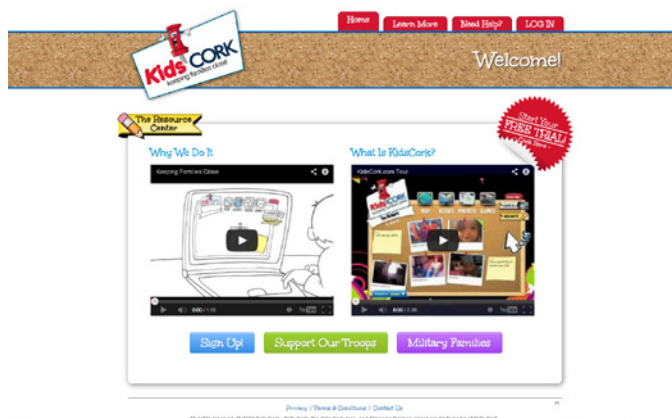
educating young readers. His first book, "The Adventures of the Sunflower Twins: The Magical Garden," revolves around the same characters, The Sunflower Twins. This is Mora's second book in the Sunflower Twins series.

KidsCork Offer Simple Solution for Families Apart This Holiday Season

One-size-fits-all Service is Perfect Holiday Gift

Families facing hectic work schedules, diverse family dynamics, or relatives who live long distance often miss out on day-to-day interaction with their children or grandchildren. KidsCork.com, a new, affordable online service allows users to pre-record themselves reading a story children can access at a later time, and is the perfect holiday gift for family members at a distance.

"If your parents are missing time with their grandchildren because they live in another state or your spouse is constantly



traveling for work, there's no better gift to offer them this holiday season than KidsCork," said Justin Butler, found of KidsCork. "It's an affordable, one-size-fits-all present that will keep your family connected while giving your children the educational benefits of being read to every day."

In preparation for the upcoming holiday season, KidsCork is adding holiday-themed books to its already extensive library.

"During the holiday season, when we all want to be with family, KidsCork can help parents, grandparents, or other families' members stay connected through stories," said Butler. "Children can go to the corkboard, open the book, and listen to their loved one reading to them as if they were right there. Even if you have to be apart during the holidays, KidsCork is a gift that can bridge that distance and keep the family close."

KidsCork.com is incredibly easy to use and navigate, even for those who aren't tech-savvy.

"If you can turn on a computer, you can use KidsCork," said Butler. "We know that technology can be daunting for some, and it was important that we created a platform where people feel

comfortable—we didn't want any barrier to stand in the way of someone being able to read to their child or grandchild."

KidsCork.com family sites are completely private, and are available through three affordable plans ranging from \$2-\$6 per month. KidsCork also has a special kid-friendly Interactive World Map to help them better visualize the places where their loved ones live—the map features pictures of animals in the area and fun facts like state bird and tree. For those living outside the U.S., the map helps teach children how to say "Hello" in the language of the country. Add KidsCork's Photo Booth and Personal Notes posting and all of a sudden, the distance becomes a little closer and a little more bearable. Visit www.kidscork.com for more information.

To Grandmother's House We Go — Making Holiday Travel with Kids Easier

RideSafer® Travel Vest Now Makes Traveling With Kids To Or With Grandparents Easier and Safer Than Ever Before

CHANDLER, Ariz. – The holidays are around the corner. It's time for traveling to visit family. Now there is a safe, easy and legal alternative to traveling with bulky, heavy car seats. The RideSafer® Travel Vest is a lightweight, easy to pack and easy to use child restraint. Plus, parents can rest assured their children will ride safely once the family reaches their destination.

"I just went on vacation with my two kids ages four and six. We've tried renting, and we've certainly tried carrying two seats in the past. I laughed quite a bit this vacation knowing I had two car seats in my carry-on," said William Sterling of Denver. "What a difference. Really took the worry about what to do about seats for the kiddos and saved my back to boot."

Car seats are notoriously cumbersome, difficult to install and rarely used correctly. Given that 84% car seats are installed or used incorrectly by parents, you can imagine grandparents may feel nervous about using them, especially considering their unfamiliarity with child restraints and possible physical limitations. The RideSafer® Travel Vest is so easy and intuitive; grandparents can feel comfortable taking the kids on an outing knowing the children will be safely and correctly restrained.

"I purchased RideSafer car seats for our grandchildren. They are really easy to use and convenient to take with us on vacation. They are small enough to fit in our suitcase, and they are easily fitted into any rental car," said Judith Monaco of Illinois.

The RideSafer® can be worn by children from 3 years old and 30 pounds up to 80 pounds (usually between 8 and 12 years of age). The vest meets or exceeds Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS 213). Dynamic crash tests have proven that the multi layer energy absorbent foams and polyethylene laminates in the front panels of the RideSafer® Travel Vest coupled with the tri layer force absorbing tether clip, which stretches in an impact, reduces the crash forces transferred to the child's body by as much as 50



Safe Ride 4 Kids
Black Friday Special - 10% off
FREE STANDARD SHIPPING (US contiguous 48 only) Everyday
Low Price Guarantee - 10X the value

Home About Us In the Community Education Our Products Store

Ride Safer
www.Saferide4kids.com

An Easy, Safe, Convenient and Legal Child Booster Seat Alternative
Which Travel Vest is Best For Your Child? [Find Out Here](#)

How is it Different? Is it Safe? Is it Legal? Why is it "better"? Sign Up 4 Updates

percent. The shoulder belt guide is specially designed to bend during a crash so that it adds to the reduction of forces to the torso and further absorbs the energies during the crash.

While a traditional booster seat boosts a child up to make the child fit the vehicle's seat belt, the RideSafer® positions the seat belt down to correctly fit the child, allowing the child to remain in the vehicle seat. Sitting in the vehicle seat is not only more comfortable for the child than using a hard plastic booster but it also is safer. It has been found that children sitting in the vehicle seat have a lower center of mass which reduces their head excursion in the event of a crash.

The RideSafer® Travel Vest is available in two different sizes and two versions. The small size is recommended for children 30 60 pounds and the large size is for children weighing 50 80 pounds. Both versions can be used with a lap and standard shoulder seatbelt system and version number two also can be used with a lap only belt and tether. Due to its compact design, it allows ample room for seating 3 across in back seat of a smaller car.

The vest has been manufactured by Safe Traffic Systems, Inc. since 2004. Safe Ride 4 Kids is the main distributor and online retailer of the RideSafer® Travel Vests.

For more information on RideSafer® Travel Vests, visit <http://saferide4kids.com> or watch our video on YouTube, <http://youtu.be/deqgfpCzYqk>.

Dear TWINS:

Hi, my name is Krissy Shadwell and my identical twins, Sebastian and Salvatore, were born May 1, 2013. I am also an identical twin and cannot wait to give advice to my boys as they grow! My boys are actually the 9th set of twins on my father's side and the 5th set of twins on my mother's side. I also have an aunt who is a twin and who gave birth to twins as well. It truly runs in our family! I feel extremely blessed. It would be awesome to see our twins in your magazine!:)



Thanks,
Krissy Shadwell, Via email

Dear TWINS:

I had a hard time getting my three and a half year old twins to sleep last night, so I told them they could go to sleep in mommy's bed.. I went in to check on them about 10 minutes later, and this is what I found...



Jessica Walsh, Via Facebook

Dear TWINS Magazine:

I have anyways enjoyed your magazine! Today is the birthday of my second set of twins. They are four years old on the 20th their twin brothers will be six years old. I had four kids in 24 months. I have survived, loved, lost sleep and smiled. Having twins had been such an amazing adventure that I wouldn't trade for anything. Here is a picture from 4 years ago.



Nellie Grossenbacher, Via Facebook

5 Child Sleep Tips

The weather is getting colder, and the holiday season is right around the corner. Along with the endless holiday songs on the radio, there are visits from family members near and far, holiday parties and an overall heightened social scene for the whole family. While grownups can walk away from all the festivities (relatively) unscathed, children fare the worst when their schedules are thrown off from fun and excitement. However, it is possible to enjoy the multitude of events while keeping your little ones on track. Amy Gemmiti, Family Sleep Institute Certified Child Sleep Consultant and Founder of Drifting to Dreamland, shares a few tips to help your children be rested and sociable:

- 1.** Maintain a solid sleep routine in the days leading up to the event. A child that is well rested is going to be able to handle minor sleep disruptions better than a child who is chronically overtired. If you know you are going to be out late one evening, make sure that sleep is a priority in the days leading up to the event and allow for extra sleep time afterwards to help your child get back to his schedule. Putting a child to bed earlier than usual for a few nights after a sleep disruption can help him get back on track.
- 2.** Try to plan your events so they don't interfere with your child's sleep schedule. If your child takes an afternoon nap and a party is scheduled at that same time, see if you can arrange to go to the party a bit late when your child wakes up. Your child will be well rested and able to enjoy his time out, and in turn you will feel comfortable knowing that he is ready to have fun! Being late is better than trying to manage a cranky, overtired child for the duration of the event.



KEEP KIDS RESTED DURING HOLIDAYS

- 3.** Ask the host / hostess if there is a place where you and d compress. Social gatherings can be overstimulating for a child which leads to acting out and stress for both parent and child! A few minutes of quiet time, away from crowds, can help children calm down. Better yet,

see if there is a spare bedroom where you can set up a portable crib if your child needs to sleep (don't forget to pack a white noise machine to drown out any outside interferences!).

- 4.** Bring comforts from home. If you are going to be driving home at (or past) your child's bedtime, bring his pajamas, comfort item and any other items that are a part of his sleep routine. That way, if he falls asleep in the car, you can transfer him to his crib with as little disruption as possible.
- 5.** Don't be afraid to say no! Looking at a family's social schedule is overwhelming and we all have a tendency to try to attend as many gatherings as possible. However, sometimes it's not possible to have it all. Take a look at your invitations and pick and choose which ones are most important to you. Having a well rested child is a great excuse to get out of Great Aunt Millie's annual fruitcake sampling party!

Amy Gemmiti is the founder of Drifting to Dreamland and a Certified Child Sleep Consultant. Amy became interested in children's sleep issues after her daughter Nina was having difficulty sleeping, and experienced firsthand the benefits of working with a sleep consultant. Amy earned her Masters in Social Work from the University of Georgia and is certified through the Family Sleep Institute. Visit www.driftingtodreamland.com for more information.

DECK OUT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

with **CRAFTY DECOR**

(Family Features) If crossing the final gift off your shopping list means your holiday giving has only just begun, these ideas for creating unique and personalized packaging may be just the ticket for some extra special flair under your tree this year.

Wrap up homemade goodies fresh from your kitchen, or other small treasures, in Cupcake Cups adorned with the festive prints found in Die Cuts With a View Christmas Memories Stack scrapbooking paper, sold exclusively at Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores. A variety of prints will let you create colorful, whimsical containers that can be saved and used again.

Even if your presents tend more toward store-bought than homemade, you can create from-the-heart gift boxes that convey how much you care. For an extra-special touch, consider creating paper mache boxes to adorn with ribbon and festive flowers made from vibrant holly leaf cutouts and sparkling glass beads.

For more crafty holiday gift-giving ideas and inspiration, visit www.joann.com.

Christmas Gift Décor Ideas

Skill level: No experience necessary

Crafting time: Average of 15-30 minutes per item

Supplies and Tools:

Die Cuts With a View 12"x12" Christmas Memories Stack
Blue Moon red glass beads
Wilton lollipop sticks
Christmas-themed cups and/or boxes
1 skein of red yarn
1" white and burgundy grosgrain ribbon
1" burgundy grosgrain ribbon
Holly leaf flower template (printable)
Paper crafting adhesive glue
or craft tape
Paper trimmer
Scissors
Pencil



Gift Box

1. Wrap ribbons or a strip of printed paper with yarn adhered on top around the middle of a box.
2. Using two prints in the stack, cut out an assortment of holly leaves (one color for the top set and another color for the bottom). Layer them together in a round flower shape, adhering leaves in place.
3. Add a red glass bead to the center of each flower.
4. Cut a tag from the tag and icon print in the stack. Hand print the recipient's name and adhere the tag to the side of the flower.
5. Repeat as needed for additional boxes.

Cupcake Cups

1. Measure the amount of yarn needed to go around each cup or box, leaving a section on each end to tie a bow. Repeat, cutting a section of yarn for each cup.
2. Cut an assortment of pennants (triangles) from different prints in the stack, repeating as necessary for desired number of cups.
3. Adhere the pennants to the center of each section of yarn.
4. Once the glue is dry and/or tape is in place, tie the banner onto each cup and set aside momentarily.
5. Remove the tag and icon stack from the stack. Cut out desired tags (or make original tags) and adhere them, one each, to the top of a lollipop stick.
6. Place your gift into each cup, insert lollipop with tag at the top, and your gift is ready to give.




9 Tips on Twin Play and Toys

by Marianne Szymanski from www.toytips.com

- 1** According to Marianne Szymanski, toy expert and founder of Toys Tips, Inc., an international child development research group she founded in 1991, has this to share about toys and twin play from her professional and personal observations:
- 2** Don't buy two of each toy every time; however, buying two of a favorite doll, animal or licensed character makes sense.
- 3** Check that skill levels and interest required, as well as age, is appropriate for each child since even twins can develop at different levels.
- 4** Keep in mind how each child will feel if he or she does not receive the same toy as his or her twin.
- 5** Think about safety of toys when used by children at the same developmental stage.
- 6** Look for toys that allow individuality of play—decreases conflict.
- 7** Watch how twins do play together more often than other children (dependent upon age).
- 8** Discover how toys for multiple users foster social interaction and develop sharing and taking turns.
- 9** Observe any gender differences when buying one toy for boy/girl twins; many gravitate toward traditional gender play patterns.

You can check out more tips by visiting www.toytips.com for reviews and more advice from Marianne Szymanski.



Hot Chocolate on a Stick: A Unique Holiday Gift

(Family Features) 'Tis the season of giving – and Hot Chocolate on a Stick is a fun and thoughtful gift that will warm hearts and taste buds alike. A creative twist on hot chocolate, it's easy to make with kids and sure to please the “hard to shop for” recipients on your list.

“Peppermint extract adds a holiday touch to these fudgy squares,” said Mary Beth Harrington of the McCormick Kitchens. “I always include a little note explaining how to enjoy the treat, like ‘Swirl into a mug of hot milk for a rich and creamy drink.’”

For the finishing touch, top each one with a marshmallow and wrap in cellophane with colorful ribbon. Discover other flavor variations – like mocha and orange – and more gift ideas at www.McCormick.com, www.Facebook.com/McCormickSpice, or www.Pinterest.com/mccormickspices.



Peppermint Hot Chocolate on a Stick

Makes 36 servings

- 2 pounds white baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Pure Peppermint Extract
- 4 drops McCormick® Red Food Color
- 18 large marshmallows, halved crosswise
- 36 lollipop sticks

1. Line 9-inch square baking pan with foil. Spray foil with no stick cooking spray. Place chopped chocolate in large bowl. Set aside.
2. Bring sweetened condensed milk and cream to simmer in medium saucepan on medium heat, stirring frequently with wire whisk. Pour over chopped chocolate. Let stand 1 minute. Whisk until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Stir in peppermint extract. Remove 3/4 cup chocolate mixture. Tint chocolate mixture pink with red food color.
3. Pour remaining (plain) chocolate mixture to prepared pan. Drop tinted chocolate mixture by tablespoons over chocolate mixture in pan. Swirl with knife for marble effect.
4. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight until firm. Cut into 36 squares. (May be made ahead. Store chocolate mixture, tightly covered, in pan in refrigerator up to 2 weeks. Bring to room temperature before cutting into squares.)
5. To assemble chocolate on a stick, thread a marshmallow half and a chocolate square onto each lollipop stick. Wrap each hot chocolate on a stick in plastic wrap or small cellophane bag. (May be assembled up to 2 days ahead.)

The Healthiest Nursing Pillow for Your Healthy Baby



By *Double Blessings™*

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Support, Comfort, Discretion
for mom and baby

Made with Eco*Loft™ Fiber • Free of fire-retardant chemicals

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Tips to Survive the Season with Toddler Twins

by Jodie Richelle

What plans have you made for the coming holiday season? Will you fill your house with elaborate decorations? Do you look forward to wandering through quaint village shops, searching for that perfect gift? Maybe you just want to sit back and relax at parties given by family and friends.



I'm pretty sure I won't be doing any of those things this year. I am the mother of toddler twins. Decorations are a waste of time. My toddlers would pull them down and stuff them into the DVD/VCR. Quaint village shops lock their doors when they see our double stroller and 20 sticky fingers coming. I do go to parties, but I don't sit and I certainly don't relax.

If you're parenting toddlers this season, keep their needs and abilities in mind as you make your holiday plans. Don't frustrate yourself by expecting too much from them.

Keep your needs in mind as well. Caring for young twins can be demanding. It won't take many extra holiday chores before you're feeling overwhelmed. Cut back on your activities before that happens. No one will enjoy your homemade cookies and beautiful decorations if you're grouchy because you're doing too much.

Keep decorations simple

If you have a Christmas tree, decorate only the top half. Otherwise, your toddlers will remove whatever they can reach. They'll chew on the Christmas lights, break the glass ornaments and spread those metal hooks everywhere. Don't use tinsel this year. It finds its way to the floor and could be dangerous if your twins swallowed it.

If you can't get into the holiday spirit without a sleigh load of decorations, take your efforts outdoors. Decorate your bushes or fences with outdoor lights. Put a big wreath on your door. These things will give you the feeling of the holidays without sacrificing your toddlers' safety or your sanity.

If you must decorate an indoor tree with your finest glass ornaments, complete with presents under the branches, enclose the tree with indoor play yard fencing to keep your little ones out.

Be smart about shopping

We all know that we should start shopping in August. We also know to leave our twins at home when we shop. Unfortunately, most of don't—or are unable—to follow this excellent advice. Here's what to do when you must venture into the holiday crowds with your toddlers.

Make a list...before you leave the house. List all the stores you want to visit and beside each store list things you must buy there. Next, prioritize your list. When you shop, go to the most important store first and make your way down the list. Don't expect to get to every store.

Head for the mall. One stop shopping when you have twins in tow is the way to go. You have to load then into and unload them from the car and strap them into their stroller only once. That's much easier than loading and unloading twins, stroller and supplies at every store. Plan to arrive at the mall when it opens. Crowds are thinner and you and your twins will be well rested.

Be Prepared. Bring along plenty of supplies. Cups of juice and some snacks will keep your toddlers from getting hungry and

crabby. Animal crackers, graham crackers and Cheerios travel well. Or you might stop for a soft-pretzel break. Bring along some toys that your twins haven't seen for some time. One desperate mom I know bought new toys to keep her kids busy while she finished her shopping. (But I only did it once.)

Shop from home. Are you unable to face another outing with your twins? This time of year my mailbox and email in-box are filled with catalogs and special online offers for shopping from the comfort of your own computer. Just be sure to leave plenty of time for deliveries and returns.

Make the most of your holiday visits

Accept all invitations to parties given by parents of toddlers.

Their houses likely will contain a room that's safe, unbreakable and filled with toys. That's the main ingredient for a good party these days.

Toddler-proof other homes. When you enter a party with your twins, quickly scan for dangers. Depending on the occasion and your relationship with the hostess, decide what you can ask to change. Few people will object to keeping the bathroom door closed, if it's nearby. If your twins are attacking the cheese tray on the coffee table, as if you can move it to a higher location.

If you are going to stay with family members for a few days, call ahead and ask your relatives to stash the crystal, hard candies and delicate decorations up high, or forego them altogether this year. Your twins probably will be starving before the turkey is ready, so plan to keep them on their regular meal schedule. (Visiting another home filled with people who fuss over them and give them, more gifts than you or they can handle will be disruptive enough; they don't need to have lunch delayed for turkey and dressing that probably won't appeal to them anyway.)

Protect Fido. Pets are tricky. Most owners believe that their pet would never harm anyone. Of course, the pet never had two 18-month-olds try to ride him like a pony. Small children simply do not know how to treat animals. Do the pet and your twins a favor and keep them separated.

Be prepared. Carry a bottle of syrup of ipecac with you when you travel. The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that many poisonings occur when daily routines are disrupted. Be on your guard this holiday season. (By the way, poinsettias are not poisonous, but mistletoe and holly berries are.)

Toddler twins need a lot of attention. Don't expect too much of them or yourself. Cut back on your commitments this holiday season in order to have plenty of time to enjoy your little angels and don't forget to take lots of pictures!

Jodie Richelle, a freelance writer who resides in Monroeville, New Jersey, made it through the toddler years and the holidays with her boy/girl twins, who are now age 11-years-old.

The MERRY MOM'S HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

Other parents may drop like overworked elves from the stress, but not you! Try these ideas to enjoy Baby's first holiday. By Kim Hays from American Baby

For my twins' first Christmas, I was determined to be a cool mom. I wrapped a few toys to put under the tree. I kept the ornaments simple. I didn't offer to host a big family feast. There was just one tradition I wanted to start: baking homemade cookies with them. Never mind that my daughter and son were 5 months old and hadn't even tried solids. I'd read somewhere that smells trigger emotional memories, and I was determined that as they grew, anytime they smelled the scent of sweets wafting from an oven, they would be flooded with memories of home.

As you might predict, my first attempt at baking with the babies wasn't the cozy kitchen scene I'd envisioned. I put too much pressure on myself to make the moment fun and perfect, starting with my recipe for complicated glittery star-shaped cookies. When my tears started rolling, I felt as if I'd ruined not just their Christmas Present but all of their Christmas Futures. Ah, Baby's first big holiday. Like the first birthday, this milestone triggers a mom's urge to plot and plan. But take it from me, a parent who has been there: Less is truly more. Use these steps to feel fortunate this holiday — not grinchy.

BLEND OLD AND NEW

Until this year, you've probably celebrated the holidays the way your parents or your in-laws did. Now that you're the mom, you have the chance to call the shots and establish new traditions. Just make sure you do so thoughtfully.

Talk to grammy. If you've always gone to your Bubbe's house for the first night of Hanukkah but want to light the first candle by your own hearth, don't dodge the topic -- be up-front with her, says Meg Cox, author of *The Book of New Family Traditions*. Reinforce what won't change; for example, you'll still go to Aunt Sue's house for the last night of Hanukkah. And resist making any broad, forever proclamations. In the end, you may really miss Bubbe's bash and want to return next year.

Give everyone a break.

"The year my daughter was born, we decided to go to a restaurant for our holiday dinner, which is something we've continued to do," says Anika Palm, of Orlando. "My family was thrilled!" Without the stress of cooking, everyone in Palm's family could focus on being together. "You order what you want and then leave the mess behind," she says.

Dial down the holiday emphasis.

If your babies are less than a month old, the best bet may be to treat the day as 20 percent holiday, 80 percent regular day. Even leaving the house may be too much. "My son was 6 days old for his first Christmas," says Melissa Schlegel, of La Crosse, Kansas. "I thought we were scaling back by not driving the three hours to my parents' and just going to my in-laws' nearby. But I hadn't yet found a proper nursing bra, and I practi-



cally had to undress in a back bedroom to breastfeed my son. I was exhausted and overwhelmed."

Roll with it. If your family has traditions you love, stick with them. They'll still feel brand-new to your little one in the coming years. That's how Olga Davis, a Chicago mom, whose daughter Madeline celebrated her first Christmas last year, sees it. "Our family is Mexican, and our big gathering is Christmas Eve," she says. "We make tamales and buñuelos [fried dough], and everyone stays up until midnight to open gifts." Davis envisions her daughter doing exactly that as a kid. "Hey, I had to wait!" she explains. "Madeline will too! And she can join in the cooking."

Get your partner's input. The two of you have probably learned to take turns visiting each other's parents for the holidays. Now build on that compromise by discussing the one or two aspects from your own childhood traditions that you want to pass down, says Cox. Make those a priority, and you'll both feel heard.

Plan some child-free time. And guard it fiercely. Hire a sitter, so you don't miss your friend's big bash. Spend a Saturday afternoon baking with your sisters or shop all day with your mom. Afterward, you'll feel more refreshed for taking care of your sweetie.

CREATE A FAMILY STORY

When you start to panic about not buying enough for Baby this holiday, take a calm-mom breath. "Most of us don't remember the gifts we receive as kids," says Cox. "What we remember are the rituals that happened every year." As your child grows, these little events are what will bring him comfort and a sense of place.

Enjoy simple moments. If you're up for it, start a tradition you can easily repeat. Cook latkes with another family. Snap a photo of your baby in her Santa jammies. "For our daughter Mary Louise's first Christmas, we placed a tiny tree in her bedroom, safely out of reach on a bookcase," says Wendy Cromwell, a mom in Atlanta. It turned into a tradition. "This year will be her third Christmas, and she can't wait to decorate her tree."

Give back. True, your baby won't remember a good deed you do for others this season, but once sharing is part of your family's holiday routine, it may stick. Buy two of a toy that you are planning to give your baby and donate one. Shannon Johnson, of Dobbs Ferry, New York, a mom of two, began donating food on a monthly basis to a needy family the year her first daughter was born. Eleven years later, they're still at it. "I knew this tradition would grow with us," she says. "And it takes the focus off what's under the tree."

Reconnect with your roots. New parents are often energized to learn more about their own culture. "We decided to add a Día de los Reyes [Three Kings Day] celebration to our family's holiday traditions when our first child was born, not just because it's a Latino holiday but because it continues the story of Jesus' birth," says Melanie Mendez Gonzales, a mom of two in San Antonio. Now Gonzales' family drinks té de canela, a cinnamon tea; eats pan dulce, a sweet bread; and plays Lotería, similar to bingo. "Part of my Mexican culture could get lost if we don't continue these traditions," she says.

Invest in relationships. "I love to curl up on the couch with my son after we've decorated the tree and talk about the ornaments we've collected," says Cox. "It's just us connecting." Your baby may not be old enough to sit and chat, but he's the perfect age for cuddling in front

of your decorations. As for my quest for cookies that first year, I did turn out a batch of tasty, three-ingredient peanut butter confections. My twins are now 5 and we've baked together every year, creating big messes and plenty of arm-less gingerbread men. I look forward to it, but if life gets in the way, a sugar-cookie scented candle sits on my kitchen counter.

TECHY TOOLS FOR HOLIDAY HELP

The latest trends for saving time and banishing stress from your to-do list.

You Want: Shopping done overnight

Try: Signing up for an Amazon Prime membership (Amazon.com). A \$79 annual fee gets you free shipping on eligible items, and free streaming movies, perfect for holiday fun.

You Want: Gifts at bargain prices

Try: Downloading the RedLaser app (free for iOS, Android, and Windows). Scan the purchase you're about to make and you'll find out whether you're getting the best deal. If not, you'll be directed to the store or online site with the lowest price.

You Want: A potluck that's easy to plan

Try: Going to Perfect PotLuck.com. Reduce the back-and-forth on who is making what, and coordinate dishes so everyone doesn't bring green bean casseroles.

You Want: Quality time with faraway family

Try: Using FaceTime, Google+ Hangouts, or Skype. Now Grammy who lives in Maine can read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas to your baby at your home in Miami.



The #1 parenting magazine for twins is now in print!

You asked for it and we listened! We know you love the ease and instant access to each and every bi-monthly digital online issue... NOW you can enjoy TWINS in a hard copy, beautiful printed format whenever you want!

Visit magcloud.com and search for: "TWINS Magazine" for all available print issues!

The advertisement features several covers of TWINS magazine. One cover shows two young girls in orange and green dresses with the headline 'Taking Twins from Crib to Bed'. Another cover shows a girl reading with the headline 'How to Prevent Double-Booking the Streets'. A third cover shows a man holding two children with the headline 'We Salute Dads & Twins!'. A fourth cover shows a man holding two children with the headline 'Sleep Solutions: Tummy Rubs, Cuddles, and Early Bed'. A fifth cover shows a man holding two children with the headline 'Road Trip: Tips for Traveling with Twins'. A central graphic is a blue starburst shape with white text.

6 Eco-Friendly Holiday Gifts for Moms

(<http://www.myprgenie.com>) — This holiday season, give mom a gift that's safe for the environment and safe for the family. Health and safety are top priorities for moms who use eco-friendly and organic products. These products make things easier for busy moms who are trying to be kinder to the planet. If you know a mom who is passionate about living a green lifestyle and making healthier choices for her family, support her lifestyle choice with some of these eco-friendly holiday gifts that she will love.

1. San Diego Bebe Eco-Nursing Pillow

Any health and eco-conscious breastfeeding momma will love this multiple-award winning San Diego Bebe(R) Eco-Nursing Pillow which offers support, comfort, and discretion for mom and baby. San Diego Bebe(R) is loaded with mom-inspired features like a cool built-in Privacy Cover(TM) for discretion while nursing in public. Made of 100% virgin polyfiber, it's never treated with fire-retardant chemicals, making this nursing pillow hypo-allergenic, non-toxic, eco-friendly and recyclable. Plus it's odor-free, glue-free, foam-free, lead-free and Phthalate-free so mom knows it's the healthiest choice for her healthy baby.

\$59.99 - \$79.99

www.doubleblessings.com



2. Yummi Food Pouch

Yummi Pouches are reusable food pouches designed to assist moms and dads with providing healthy snacks to their kids. Yummi Pouches are perfect to be filled with fresh blended snacks. Ready to receive food prepared in batches, frozen or refrigerated, and consumed by kids on-the-go in between activities, no spoon required! And after use, simply wash in the dishwasher or rinse with hot water and soap, air dry, and reuse over and over again!

6 pouches for \$14.99

www.yummipouch.com

3. Planet Wise Nursing Cover

Planet Wise Nursing Covers are made of high quality, 100% Designer fabrics and includes a matching storage bag. This simple and discreet, yet stylish nursing cover helps Mama feel at ease breastfeeding in any environment. The rigid neckline allows you to watch your baby nurse and the extra fabric on the sides gives you more privacy. It even has a handy front pocket! Includes a small matching zippered storage bag.

\$24.99

www.planetwiseinc.com



4. Milkmakers Starter Pack Lactation Cookies

Milkmakers knows how frustrating low milk supply is which is why they made this starter pack for those who needs the extra support and convincing. At milkmakers, they are supporting moms everywhere with one cookie at a time. They recommend breastfeeding moms eat 1-2 cookies per day in order to reap the full benefits of this wonderful organic product. Maintain the cookies freshness by simply storing your extra cookies in the freezer, and when needed they will soften up in a few minutes.

\$24.99

www.ecomom.com



5. Rockin' Green Laundry Detergent

Fun, eco-conscious moms will love the edgy,

alternative look to this rockin' eco-friendly laundry detergent that is super safe for the environment. Rockin' Green is made for families that care about taking care of themselves and the Earth. Rockin' Green products are made with a biodegradable plant-based and petroleum-free surfactant. They are septic and grey-water safe and never tested on animals. Each product comes in recyclable packaging and the brand is also gluten and vegan friendly.

\$15.95

www.rockinggreensoap.com

6. Handmade All Natural Hand-Made Goat Milk Soap for Babies!

Peaceful by Nature Farm's hand-made goat milk soap just for babies! Their Unscented Baby Bath has no added scent and is a balanced blend of moisturizing oils with added skin loving Kokum Butter. Their Unscented Oatmeal Baby Bath is the same as their Unscented Baby Bath with the addition of finely ground Oatmeal (this blend of ingredients are for Mommies that would like the extra soothing qualities of oatmeal in their babies' baths.) Their third soap is a Lavender Oatmeal Baby Bath. It combines the moisturizing, soothing suds of the first two with the added relaxing benefits of lavender essential oil. You can learn more about their new baby line of all natural, hand-made soaps and place your order by visiting:

www.peacefulbynaturefarm.com/





Gifts We Love this year

It's that time of year where parents scramble to find all the must-have gifts on their kiddos lists... but how do you know which gifts to buy? Well, we are making it super easy with our Annual Holiday Gift Guide! We have scoured the internet, searched high and low and even attended the ABC Kids Expo (the largest trade show for the juvenile industry) in Las Vegas where we found the latest and greatest products we want to share with you! The following are our TOP PICKS for 2013 with something for everyone on your list this year!



KIDSEmbrace™ Character Car Seats

These seats are amazing and so creative and fun! You won't ever have a problem getting them into these seats with all the features and safety you seek. In sudden stops or crashes, the KIDSEmbrace™ seat controls forward movement of the child's head using their own patent-pending high-position top tether system, which allows the head support to rise and lower with the tether in place. The KIDSEmbrace™ car seat offers side-impact protection and their deeper "wraparound" headrest design shields the sides of your child's face from flying glass in event of a collision. In fact, no other child safety seat on the market has the same combination of features as this one. They are providing the highest quality product, conceived by a veteran design team and engineered to NHTSA rigid crash test standards and their own rigorous KIDSEmbrace™ quality standards.

With characters like Batman, Spongebob, Dora and more, your twins will fall in love with these car seats and so will you! Seats are now available at Toys-R-Us/Babies-R-Us and you can learn more by visiting:

www.kidsembrace.com



IMATWIN specialized jewelry & gifts

Introducing the IMATWIN specialized jewelry and gifts line... These new bracelets and gifts were created by parents of twins that were seeking a unique and special present they could give to their twins that would signify that very special "twin-bond"! After years of searching and not finding anything special and being disappointed, they designed something on their own, went to an attorney and he told them it was a waste of money. It wasn't until years later when selling their house they found the designs, had them made and found a different attorney to trademark their special twin themed designs. After showing them off to everyone they know, the response has been overwhelming and they knew that they were not the only parents out there who wanted something special to give to their twins... Another cool aspect of this company is since they are parents of twins; they didn't want everyone to pay full retail by having to buy two when purchasing items for their twins, so when ordering any of the IMATWIN items, customers receive TWO – one for each twin!

www.imatwin.com



The Room to Grow™ 4-in-1 Play Yard & Bathinet

Are you looking for a versatile yet easy and safe play yard that grows with your twins? We think we have found your product... The Room to Grow 4-in-1 Play Yard & Bathinet is your answer! These award winning products were developed by a Mom for safety, and convenience and are more baby friendly than traditional hard-sided play yards and bathtubs. Because of their shape, there are no wasted corners. Babies have room to develop new motor skills in a comfy environment or play with their twin.

Their Bathinet, not only provides a place to nap, change, feed or bathe your baby in comfort, but the 45 degree angle safety insert, aids in digestion for babies with reflux. What's also cool is that they actually invite parents, grandparents, daycares, children's hospitals, resorts and emergency rescue groups to learn more about all the amazing safety and developmental features for their products and view their testing video at www.GrowingRoomInc.com



See GrowingRoomInc.com for Holiday Special on Closeout Colors.



MoM owned Business Multiple Fun Apparel

Looking for fun and creative twin-themed apparel? Look no further than MultipleFun.com! As a mother with four children (including triplets!) and a graphic designer, Mindy Grubbs wanted to offer fun and creative apparel for people who are excited about having multiples. Their mission at multiplefun.com is to celebrate children who come more than one at a time. They love providing clothing to meet your needs and give you bragging rights, too!

www.multiplefun.com



twice as nice long sleeve long youth pink • \$26



mom of multiples athletic juniors • \$22



wombmate long sleeve onsie • \$22



stick figure long sleeve tee youth • \$22





MoM owned Business

The San Diego BeBe Eco-Twin Nursing Pillow by Double Blessings

"The San Diego Bebe® Eco-Nursing Pillow is not only a very supportive pillow with amazing features for discreet nursing, but is also free of flame-retardant chemicals that have been shown to cause adverse health effects in animal studies. I applaud Double Blessings for taking steps to produce high quality products that meet the same flammability standards without using these chemicals."

~ Dr. Heather Stapleton, Duke University Chemical Scientist



San Diego Bebe® Eco-Nursing Pillow features include:

- Privacy Cover™ - Built-in, detachable nursing cover-up made of lightweight mesh allows airflow & discretion.
- Angled Surface - Positions baby towards mother, encouraging proper positioning, latch, suckle & swallow.
- Comfort Bolster™ - Provides added comfort & security.
- Detachable Back Pillow – Placement anywhere along mother's spine for optimum posture & comfort.
- Adjustable Fit - Waist strap with Quiet-Squeeze buckle fits up to 52" waist, securing pillow to mom.

www.doubleblessings.com



Adorable "Thing 1" and "Thing 2" themed apparel

A variety of Dr. Seuss themed apparel for your infant twins, toddlers and beyond! Each price includes TWO sets for the "Thing 1" and "Thing 2" in your family! Just like twins, these outfits are loads of fun... They are made with soft and cozy cotton interlock and fasten with authentic Dr. Seuss snaps.

Onesies are available in Sizes: 3 Months, 6 Months, 9 Months

Rompers available Sizes: 3, 6, 9, 12 months
Caps & Booties fits babies up to 9 months of age

Tee shirts, made of 100% heavyweight cotton available in sizes: Small (12M), Medium (18M), Large (24M)

http://www.doubleblessings.com/index.php?route=product/category&path=24_94





**PRODUCTS AS
UNIQUE AS YOU ARE.**



**JEWELRY
KEY CHAINS
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IMA Twin products will be available in December 2013. Checkout our Facebook page contest and your twin images could be chosen for the launch of our website.

**For more information email:
Info@IMATwin.com**



IMATWIN.COM





OUR HOLIDAY FAVORITES...

Dreamworks Holiday Collection DVD



Join some of your family's favorite characters, Shrek, Po, Toothless and the rest of the Dream-Works gang, in four timeless holiday specials, available for the first-time in one DVD box set! Available for the FIRST-TIME this limited edition collection features four holiday favorites in one DVD box set for just \$19.98. The glittering box set includes *Shrek The Halls*, *Merry Madagascar*, *Kung Fu Panda Holiday* and *Dragons Holiday: Gift of the Night Fury* as well as bonus features including games, music videos and more!

Christmas Puzzles:

Santa's Helpers – A festive 100-pc puzzle that features Santa and his animal friends preparing for a magical sleigh ride! Ages 6+, SRP \$12.49

Santa's Workshop – A colorful 300-pc puzzle that showcases Santa and his elves checking their list twice! Ages 9+, SRP \$13.49



OUR PICKS FOR GIFTS FOR BABIES...

MoM owned Business Holiday Onesies

beeXpression has good-natured, light-hearted messages on all of their bibs, onesies and tees and each item they sell is 100% organic. A portion of each sale is donated to a non-profit grief program for kids and items are reasonably priced ranging from \$10 to \$24! These Holiday items along with their everyday bee-themed clothing can be purchased online at www.beeXpression.com



Baby Sherpa Diaperbag Backpacks

Diaperbag backpacks are high quality, versatile backpacks that simply out-pack the competition. Technically and ergonomically designed, these backpacks are non-toxic, PVC and lead free. Safety tested and consumer compliant, the Baby Sherpa Diaperbag Backpacks are a favorite with active parents and their families the world over.

<http://www.babysherpa.com>



Round the Farm



Price \$43.95

Do you wonder what's happening 'Round the Farm? Learning motor skills, cause and effect, new sounds and having fun, as your child learns to roll soft kitty, or press the right ear of each to hear animal sounds. It's four funny farm animals in one. Bark, Meow, Oink,

and Ribbit, plus a bell chime inside, too. <http://www.alextoys.com/product/round-the-farm/>



Ulubulu Baby Bib (ulubulu.com)

Ulubulu Baby Bibs are 100% silicone bibs, a non-toxic alternative to the various plastic and vinyl bibs on the market. 11 different animal shaped styles, including Hippo, Elephant, Frog, Tiger, Cow, Shark and more, make Ulubulu Bibs the cutest and most fun bibs on the market. Each Ulubulu has an adjustable neck and nifty crumb-catching pocket. Can be safely washed in the dishwasher or easily wiped clean. Rolls up for easy storage. 100% silicone lets parents rest assured their child is not being exposed to lead, BPA, phthalates, latex or PVC, as with other products on the market. For children from 6 months and up. 9.99, ulubulu.com



OUR PICKS FOR GIFTS for TODDLERS...

The Safe2go Child Safety Harness



The Safe2go Child Safety Harness is a cute character backpack, which conceals that it is actually a child safety harness. The backpack/safety harness is equipped with adjustable padded shoulder and waist straps. It comes with a retractable 38" tether which can hold children up to 50 lbs and can be retracted into the pack when not needed. There is room in the backpack for a small toy or snack. Designed for walking age to 4 years old.

<http://www.babysherpa.com/home/about-safe2go-safety-harness.html>

The Go-Go Babyz® Wagon Stroller

The last stroller you ever need for your growing, active family!



The Go-Go Babyz® Wagon Stroller rolls out with the first wagon to hit the market with a custom telescoping push handle and rear braking system. Designed to meet the ASTM Stroller Safety Standards, the Wagon Stroller is the safest and most convenient wagon

on the market that easily converts into a single or double stroller. The optional, custom seats with a 5-point safety harness can be set in two positions: upright and reclined. Need more space for your sports gear or groceries? No problem! One or both of the seats can be easily added or removed to convert this stroller back into a more traditional wagon. www.gogobabyz.com/

Busy Tot

\$38.95

An activity triangle that's fun to play with as they learn and grow. A sturdy, solid wood base provides support for little ones as they learn to sit and stand. Bright colors and bold graphics draw attention and smiles! Four sides of activity with dozens of moving parts stimulate through color and shapes. Blocks that spin with colorful designs help children learn relationships: sun turns to clouds, door is to house, apple is to tree, and many more. A large mirror for exploring facial expressions and pegs that easily move when pushed along a squiggly line provide even more active fun and learning concepts.



<http://www.alextoys.com/product/busy-tot/>

Tots First Crayons

\$5.95

The first step in learning about color recognition, tactile sense and creativity begins with learning to hold the crayon. ALEX makes it easy for even the littlest hands to hold with these chunky, triangular shaped crayons. There's no wrong way! Six vibrant colors for whatever a growing mind can imagine. Even the lightest touch will create a thick line of vivid color. Just add paper and watch the magic begin.



<http://www.alextoys.com/product/tots-first-crayons/>

OUR PICKS FOR GIFTS for PRE-SCHOOLERS...

My Workbench

Price \$104.95

My Workbench encourages creativity and confidence with your little builder. This big, stand-up wooden work bench includes a 37-piece tool set including tools, robot, car, nuts and bolts. Easy for little hand to pick up, turn, hammer and screw. A great 'I can do it!' toy. Adult assembly required. <http://www.alextoys.com/product/my-workbench/>



OUR PICKS FOR GIFTS for PRE-SCHOOLERS (con't)...

In My Kitchen

Price \$87.95

Even little ones know the kitchen is the heart of the home. Give them their own space to play and create with the In My Kitchen play set. The beautifully colored all-in-one set includes an oven, stove top and sink. Hang pots and pans on the pegs above for easy storage not included). Made of durable, solid wood, for sturdy construction, this kitchen will be a treasured set for years to come. 19 3/4 high x 14 1/2 wide. Easy assembly. Complete the set with the pots and kitchen accessories in the Completer Cook Set by ALEX. <http://www.alextoys.com/product/in-my-kitchen/>



Peg & Layer Jungle

Price \$16.46

Create a beautiful, 3D jungle with Peg & Layer Jungle! Stack the foam jungle-shaped pieces on the pegs and create

a jungle world of fun! Monkeys, trees, flowers and lots more jungle shapes. Foam peg board is decorated like a jungle! A wonderful way to teach young children counting. Part of the Little Hands Skill Builder series by ALEX. <http://www.alextoys.com/product/peg-layer-jungle/>

OUR PICKS FOR GIFTS for SCHOOL AGE...

Design Masters

(Ford Focus RS500, Ford Boss 302 and Ford Street Racer I, \$6.99 each; Ford F-150 SVT Raptor and Ford GT, SRP \$9.99 each)

For 2013, the Design Masters line of auto sketchbooks is rolling out a new fleet of popular vehicles from The Ford Motor Company! Each offering presents base model vehicles and color instructions for kids 7 and up to follow or creatively interpret to produce their own unique concept car. Artists choose the wheels, spoilers, bumpers and emblem as well as a range of car parts to create awe-inspiring vehicle designs. <http://mydesignmasters.com/>



Perfect Nail Salon

Price \$29.99

The ultimate fashion station! Girls can beautify their nails at home with this complete salon kit that includes everything young fashionistas need to polish, decorate and personalize their nails. The kit contains the Style Me Up! nail dryer, six bottles of nail polish, 30 nail stickers, bags of sequins and nail glitter powder, color instructions and more.



Creativity for Kids Monster Truck Custom Shop Activity

Price \$32.00

Kids will enjoy customizing their own monster truck with paint and stickers. Includes (4) plastic trucks, 2 sticker sheets, 1 paintbrush, acrylic paint and instructions. <http://www.birthdayexpress.com/Creativity-for-Kids-Monster-Truck-Custom-Shop-Activity/74807/PartyItemDetail.aspx?mode=Add>



Coloring Castle

Price \$20.00

A royally fun party activity for girls and boys. Kids enjoy hours of fun coloring and then playing inside and around the outside of this cardboard castle. Measures 32H, with open-air "courtyard" so kids can stand up in the middle. Easy assembly. Please note: Markers are sold separately. <http://www.birthdayexpress.com/Coloring-Castle/43122/PartyItemDetail.asp>



GREAT APPS for the HOLIDAYS

Want to make your twins happy in a snap? Then you can't miss these must have apps...

We want to share the best new apps and tech products to have on hand this holiday season for the kids. Trust us; you won't want to travel without them.

The following APPS have been specially developed for children ages 3+. Have an "appy" holiday!



Pandora iBooks: A must-have! Currently the #1 children's book in the Apple store, the Pandora stories will captivate your little ones and have them engaged and excited in a matter of seconds. With a fantastic storyline and adorable characters your children will fall in love.

SchoolZone's new Little Scholar Learning Tablet:

Unlike other tablets currently on the market, Little Scholar has created original programming that can be seen only on the SchoolZone tablet. The tablets feature series, Charlie & Company, will have your children excited and occupied. The tablet also comes pre-loaded (no added costs) with over 199 learning apps (subjects include: math, reading, spelling, science, geography, and creativity). SchoolZone has been the #1 parenting resource for learning books, flashcards, apps, and games so the Little Scholar is sure to be a big winner. Retail: \$199 Charlie & Company



Axel's Chain Reaction, a new storybook app!

In an effort to help make learning fun and exciting for today's younger generations this holiday season, children's author, Allison Pomenta wrote this new storybook app. A creative child who has a hard time connecting with his peers because of his distracted, fidgety behavior, Axel struggles with challenges that many children face: clumsiness, making friends, and on top of it all, Daniel, the class bully. In an attempt to win over his classmates, Axel — inspired by examples of great Kinetic Art — strives to create an impressive moving sculpture. However, in the end, it is his cheerfulness, generosity, and ability to create something beautiful out of a giant mess that changes the way others perceive him.



The interactive app allows Pomenta to show kinetic art in actual movement, and heighten readers' empathy towards Axel through deeper exploration of the character's processes.

My BuddyTag

Parents of twins can easily feel overwhelmed, especially when their twins start walking. Instead of fearing family vacations, embrace the challenge. To do so, I would like to introduce you to the newest child-safety must-have...

My BuddyTag is a wristband equipped with Bluetooth technology that pairs to a downloadable app for iPhones (including fourth generation iPad, iPad mini, 5th generation iPod Touch). Kids get the independence they desire and parents never have to worry about losing track of them.



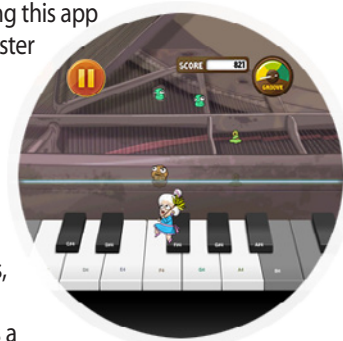
The app allows you to pair as many My BuddyTag's as you need!

Key features include:

- Proximity Alert System- When kids are out of proximity (about 50 feet) an alarm will sound on your phone to alert you.
- Panic Button- Located on the wristband, kids can press the button to alert their parents they are in danger.
- Email with Location- Allows parents who have kids on field trips or with a babysitter to view when and where they were last tracked by the app.

Piano Duster 2.0 by JoyTunes

During the holiday travel season, keep kids busy with a new app that can actually teach them to play Christmas songs on the piano. I thought you might have interest in reviewing this app for a timely holiday travel feature. Piano Duster 2.0 by JoyTunes is a new mobile app that teaches kids to play the piano through an exciting game-like atmosphere. It's a great way to keep them busy during holiday travel on a plane or in the car on a road trip! Kids can select from top holiday songs, like Jingle Bells, We Wish You A Merry Christmas, Deck the Halls and so much more. They can even compete and connect with friends. It's a great way to incorporate a little education while they play on the iPad or iPhone! And what's more, it's free!



How Technology Can Simplify Your Holiday Season

(Family Features) The advancements in technology have changed many things in our daily lives including how we celebrate the holidays. From making shopping easier to planning holiday getaways, the endless capabilities of smartphone devices have made the holidays easier and better than ever before, allowing you to save time and money all with the touch of a button.

From travel to shopping, here are some of the ways to use technology to enhance your yuletide celebrations and resolve some of the stress-inducing activities of the season.



Holly Jolly Entertaining With Ease

Time spent with loved ones is what the holidays are all about. Here are some ways your smartphone can make these occasions even more joyous:

- **Festive films and shows:** Whether you want to entertain the kids while waiting to board the plane or just want to catch your favorite holiday movie from the convenience of your phone, you can do so with ease with the Netflix app. Included with your Netflix membership, this easy app lets you download and stream thousands of your favorite television shows and movies to enjoy at any time you please.
- **Merry-making invitations:** Send out invitations to your ugly sweater party or caroling bash with unique, perfectly decorated invites with the Evite app. This helpful tool also allows you to manage guest lists and RSVP to other events in a snap.
- **Good tidings and great tunes:** The holidays would not be complete without the sounds and songs of the season filling the

air. From kids' school parties to a holiday feast with family and friends, you can create your own personal holiday playlists to fit every event and mood. This unlimited access to music at your fingertips is a gift in itself.

Holiday shopping simplified

So many gifts to purchase and so little time. Try these handy helpers to get all the gifts you need and still have time to stop and enjoy the eggnog:

- **Guesswork-free gifts:** Some apps, such as the Pickie's Best Gift Giver tool, use the Facebook likes and preferences of your gift recipients to create a list of suitable items they would love. It also combines all of these recommended items in a convenient, click-through catalog to make purchasing gifts easier. Make the shopping experience go even more smoothly



by ensuring your phone has a strong, reliable signal. The zBoost SOHO cell phone signal booster kit increases signals up to 2500 square feet, making it perfect for your home or office. For more information, visit www.zBoost.com.

- **Lists you'll love:** When it comes to keeping track of presents, there's no need for pen and paper. The Christmas Gift List app allows you to create a budget for each recipient and then track gifts as they are purchased.
- **One cool countdown:** Follow the @ChristmasCount on your Twitter app for jolly updates on your favorite holiday. Besides keeping you aware of how many days you have left to shop, it also includes trivia and giveaways to keep you in the spirit.
- **See Santa save:** Ever wondered if you could get a gift at a better price? The RedLaser app allows you to search for a specific product and find its price at all retailers within the area. It's "In-store pickup" function allows you to purchase the gift directly from your phone for easy pickup and to ensure availability during those last-minute scrambles.

Taking the stress out of travel

If your holiday plans require traveling with the family, the proper planning tools are essential. Try these holiday helpers that make traveling a breeze:

- **Joyful journeys:** Need a break from the family? Want to explore the best attractions in grandpa's hometown? The Tripomatic app allows you to customize your own travel itinerary by entering the dates and location of your stay. Along with top attractions for

your vacation spot, the app also pulls up an easy download of city guides so you can find the best diner, historic monument or shopping venue in town.

- **Travels by road:** If your holiday travels require a car ride, give the RoadNinja app a try. Restaurants, gas stations and other points of interest are posted for each highway exit on your route. Make sure you can access such helpful apps by ensuring you have the proper signal in your car. The zBoost zForce Cell Phone Signal Booster improves signal strength for voice and data to help you enjoy the journey.
- **Plans and planes:** Keep all of your travel plans in one spot with the Triplt itinerary app. By linking to your email account, it sorts and places confirmation emails and other travel documents into the app.
- **A cheerful stay:** Whether you didn't plan far enough ahead, or your mother's house is overflowing with relatives, a peaceful hotel room is at hand with the Hotel Tonight app. By specializing in last-minute deals provided by area hotels, you end up with a luxurious room at a lower price.



Festive holiday apps for kids

Let the little ones in on all the merriment with these great apps designed just for them. Just download onto your device and let your child play away while embracing the holiday spirit.



Gingerbread Crazy Chef — Cookie Maker

With ingredients for dough and plenty of fun ways to decorate, kids learn to make their own gingerbread cookies with this creative app.



Jolly Jingle

This musical app teaches the words to popular holiday songs, encouraging kids to join in on the fun by singing along.



Toca Hair Salon — Christmas Gift

Let the kids take Santa to the salon for a special haircut or dye job. Kids will have a blast giving Santa a makeover just in time for his big night.



Product Preview

Check out all the latest and greatest products and services for twins, triplets and higher order multiples! Click on each ad to learn more about the product or to purchase from the company directly!



12 Ways of Gifting this Holiday Season

by Kim Carlson

Season's green'ing! This is the perfect time of year to get in the green spirit. Many Americans are still on tight budgets with savings on their minds. Just in time for gift-giving season Kim Carlson, eco-expert and founder of EarthSmart Consumer Certified, is ushering the holidays with the twelve ways of gifting. Before disposing of commonly tossed items, stop and rethink it. Can it be made more attractive, repaired or crafted into something else? Give it a second-life. Here are the twelve ways of gifting that are not only wallet friendly but eco-friendly too.

1. Extra or leftover fabric? Make cloth covered gift boxes or bags instead of wrapping paper.
2. Cover gift boxes with left over contact paper or wallpaper.
3. Use saved bows from other gifts. It's ok to reuse these items as long as you're not giving it to the person who gave it to you.
4. Last year's holiday cards make great gift tag. When cutting the card use decorative scissor for a little something extra.
5. Take a walk through Mother Nature and collect pinecones. Pinecones with raffia (ribbon made from a plant) are great for adorning boxes.
6. Ice cream lovers, start collecting and saving your cartons. Take a washed out and clean cylinder ice cream carton. Cover the out side and use as
7. Old paint and coffee cans are great for shipping or using as a gift box in a fun creative way. Make sure it's thoroughly cleaned out and decorate the outside. It can even be a double gift where the person can use the paint can for storing or organizing items,
8. Shipping? If you have left over or don't mind popping extra dry popped popcorn for movie night, this is a great way to send a treat for the birds while protecting your package.
9. Reusable items, such as hair bows, ornaments, shoe laces or toys can adorn packages and gift bags. Again, they can double as gifts as well.
10. Stencils or pictures from holiday cards pasted onto a plain brown paper bag or box.
11. Old neckties can make clever bows on any gift. The silkiness of the neckties glams up any ole box with out doing much.
12. For those who have old faux flowers collecting dust, use them for gift wrapping and to dress up ordinary boxes. Just be sure to dust them off first.

Remember get creative, these are only starter ideas. Feel free to try alternative gifting options that are green as well. After the holidays, be sure to use leftover gift wrap to line shelves or drawers. Also it can be cut up to make great scratch pads by stringing together. For more information on Kim, please visit www.earthsmartconsumer.com. Also, be sure to follow her on twitter @KimEarthCarlson and become a facebook fan at EarthSmart Consumer Certified.



TRY THESE TWINS SHOP EXCLUSIVES....

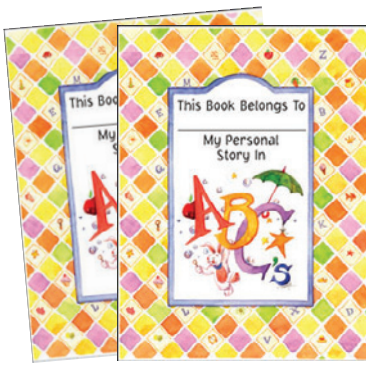
Click on any of these products to learn more!



Twins Growth Chart

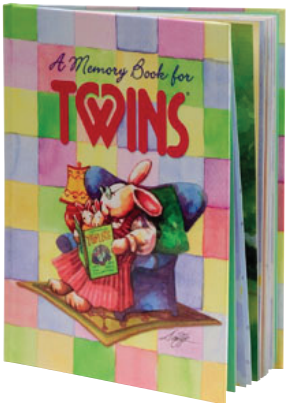


A Very Special Twin Story



My Personal Story in ABCs

Lifetime Memory Books



SAVE \$\$ WHEN YOU PURCHASE OUR SPECIALLY PRICED PACKETS...



Toddler Twins' Gift Packet

Making Memories Gift Packet



Super MOMs Gift Packet



Boy / Boy Twin Story Packet

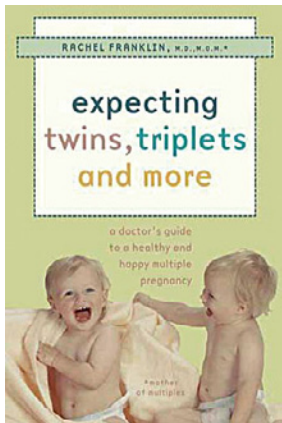


Girl / Girl Twin Story Packet

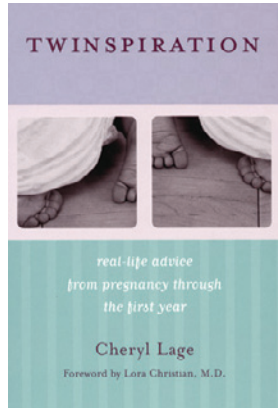


Boy / Girl Twin Story Packet

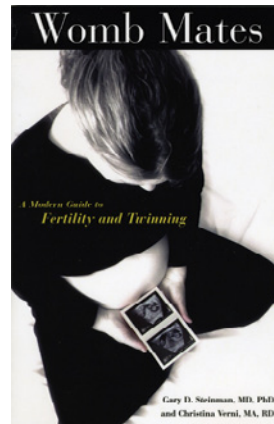
CHECK OUT OUR HUGE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR PARENTS & KIDS...



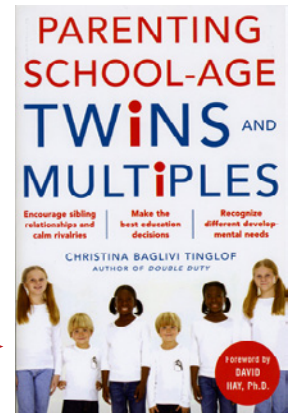
Expecting Twins, Triplets and More



Twinspiration



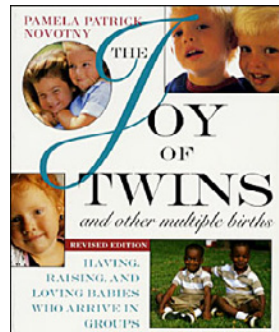
Womb Mates



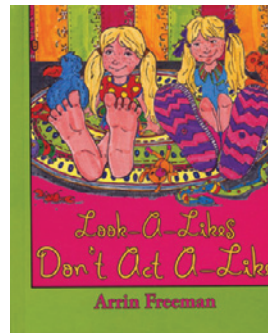
Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples



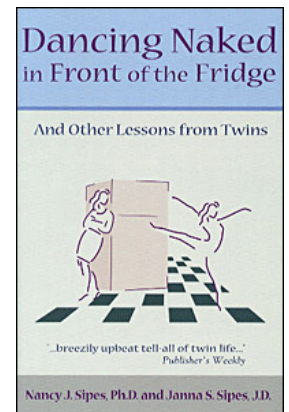
Twin Tales



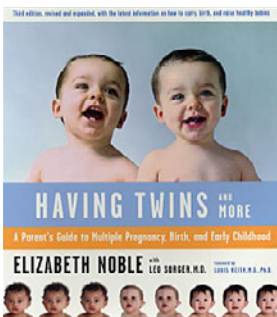
The Joy of Twins and Other Multiple Births



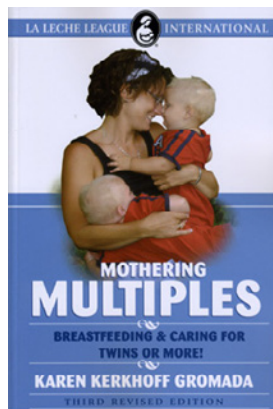
Look-a-Likes Don't Act-a-Like



Dancing Naked in Front of the Fridge



Having Twins and More



Mothering Multiples



Two Times the Fun



Bedtime Safari

Double Takes



1

Tenna & Adeline, FR
9-months
Hot Springs, Arkansas



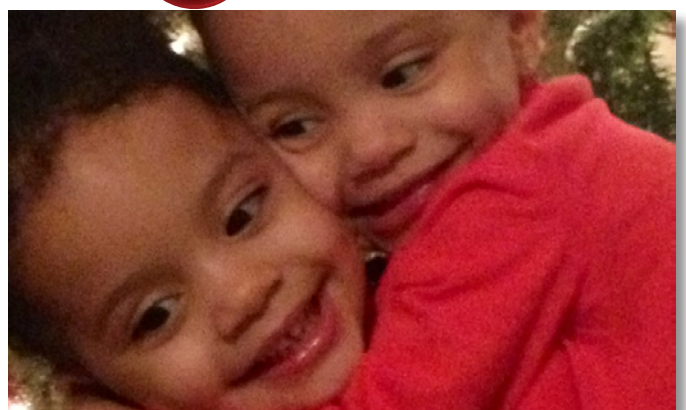
2

Jude & Sloane, FR
Ages: 2 weeks in photo (now age 1),
Dallas, Texas



3

Zachary & Isaac, FR,
3 months in photo
Indianapolis, Indiana



4

Adalyn & Emerie, ID
Age 4
Warren, Ohio



5

Alexis & Avery, FR,
7-weeks
Lawrenceville, Georgia



6

Carsen & Holden, ID
6-months
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

Holiday 2013



7

Lily & Adriana, FR
8-months
Southport, NC



8

Aiden & Sophia, FR,
8 days old in photo (now Age 2)
Austin, Texas



9

Brady & Riley, ID
8-months
in photo (now 19-months)
Cheyenne, Wyoming



10

Kayla & Kylie, FR
Age 3 in photo (now age 4)
Rossville, Illinois



11

Hannah & Callan, FR
Age 5,
Vancouver, Washington



12

Cooper & Kerrick, FR
Age 2 ½,
Tulsa, Oklahoma



13

Brooke & Brielle Mitchell, FR
8-months
Sewell, New Jersey



14

Katie & Matthew, FR
Age 5
Highlands Ranch, Colorado



15

John & Sean, FR
6-months in photo (now Age 3 ½)
Portola Valley, California



16

Miley & Kaylee, ID
Age 2
Bay City, Michigan



17

Easton & Savannah, FR
9-months
Conway, South Carolina



18

Kaleb & Kayden, ID
Age 2
Ontario, Canada

Holiday2013



19

Zoey & Natalie, ID
Age 3 ½
Palestine Texas



20

Eli & Eva, FR
7-moths in photo
Waukesha, Wisconsin



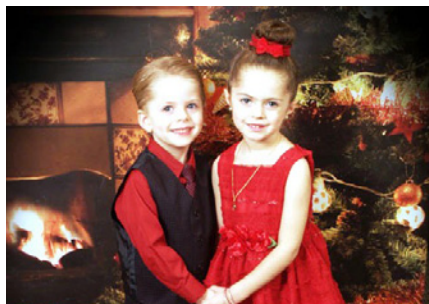
21

Michael & Jackson, FR
1-week in photo
Batavia, Illinois



22

Bailey & Addison, FR,
8-months in photo
(now age 4 ½)
Sugar Land, Texas



23

Donald & Katrina, FR
Age 5
Union, New Jersey



24

Brayden & Blaise, FR
Age 1-month in photo
Wurtsboro, New York



25

Hailey & Holly, FR
Age 2
Columbia, Maryland



26

Ian & Piper, FR
6-months in photo
Edgewood, Washington



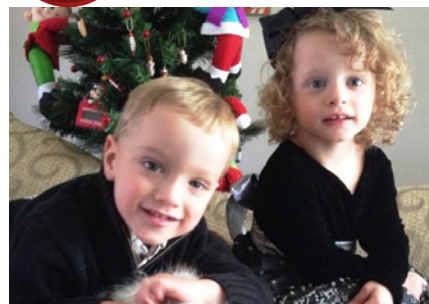
27

Lukas & Landon, ID
7-months
St. Louis, Missouri



28

Teegan & Tessa, ID
Age 3 months
Camarillo, California



29

Jonathan & Adelyn FR
Age 3
Moscow, Pennsylvania



30

Branden & Jared, FR
7-months
Paxinos, Pennsylvania



Four-Year-Old

SOCCER STARS

by Cindy Rasmussen



I have been looking forward to this for a long time. My husband was a soccer player; I was a soccer player, so of course when our twin girls were old enough we signed them up to play soccer. However, early in the season we learned that “old enough” is a relative term because it seems that, perhaps, four-year-olds may not quite be ready for organized sports.

I was the coach (it was more like a cross between sheep herding and motivational speaking) and let’s just say it didn’t quite go as I had hoped.

The Top 10 Signs your Four-Year-Olds May Not Be Ready to Play Soccer:

10. When it’s time to go to soccer they say, “I’m playing Pet Shop now, maybe later.”
9. Instead of the team jersey, they insist on wearing a tutu and Elmo slippers.
8. If you can get them to the game, you lose them as soon as they see the playground.
7. Even before the game starts you hear, “When is snack time?”
6. During the game you look up and see only three of your players, you spot the other one on the sidelines petting a dog...it’s your daughter...then her twin sister joins her and you’re down to two players.
5. You encouragingly ask one of your girls if she wants to go kick the ball, “I want to play on the playground...I’m wearing a pink shirt...I have a birthday party this afternoon...can we get a dog?”
4. Saying “Freeze!” or “Stop!” when they go out of bounds has no effect on your girls and they end up dribbling all the way to the Porta Potties.
3. Seeing a Porta Potty automatically makes a four-year-old gotta go.
2. By half-time you’re down to three players; one didn’t show, one left crying after warm-ups, one has been on a water break for fifteen minutes, and two are playing with someone’s baby sister (your daughters again).
1. On the way home you ask, “So did you have a fun at soccer today?” One daughter answers, “Yeah, ‘cept for all the running, and the kicking.” The other chimes in, “I liked the fruit snacks!”

My dream of coaching my daughters all the way to the high school state championship was somewhat dashed but I recognized that maybe this is just how four-year-olds are, on and off the field. When I was four my parents were trying to teach me not to kick things and I didn’t start playing soccer until I was eight. So maybe I should just pocket the player fees, meet some friends at the playground, and of course, bring some fruit snacks. Maybe we will try again next season or maybe we will try something with less running and kicking. ♥



Cindy Rasmussen is a freelance writer and stay-at-home mom to six kids, including a set of twin girls (now five). She chronicles the antics of her family on her blog *Barren to Bonkers: A Humorous Look at Life After Infertility...with Six Kids!* (www.barrentobonkers.wordpress.com). The Rasmussen’s make their home in the ‘burbs of Minneapolis.

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