

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINS™

**It's Our 29th
Birthday...
Celebrate
with Us!**

www.TwinsMagazine.com

**Protecting
them against
RSV**



CHOMP

**5 Tips for
Dealing
with
Biting!**

WANTED:
Some Peace & Quiet!

**Be Prepared for the
Placement of
Multiples in School**

January/February 2012



Columns:

NEW—Twin Biz Spotlight _____ 8
Featuring Twin Sisters Productions

Raising Twins through Each Age & Stage



Pregnant with Twins—The Genetic Ties to Your Pregnancy by *Kenneth Ward, M.D.* _____ 10



Infant Twins—Protecting Them against RSV by *Richard Leonard, M.D., F.A.A.P.* _____ 12



Toddler Twins—Chomp—5 tips for dealing with children who bite by *Laura Sky Brown* _____ 14



Preschool Twins—WANTED: Some Peace and Quiet by *Alice M. Vollmar* _____ 16

Tales from Twins _____ 23
“The Red Dress” by *Jacqueline Davidson Kopito and Amy Davidson Lombardo*

Mom-2-Mom _____ 27
Are Things Too Hectic? Define Your Focus by *Joann M. Amoroso*

LOL: Laugh out Loud _____ 33
You Know You Have Multiples If... by *Kerri J. Reinbold, RN, BSN*



On the Cover:

Meet these adorable fraternal twin girls, Kara & Summer from Round Rock, Texas. This cover photo was taken by proud mom June at their 1st birthday photo session with help from Grandma and Dad. The girls are now 16-months old. Kara is a strong-willed girl who doesn't have a problem letting the world know what she wants. Summer is a little more reserved and laid back than her sister. Together they are the perfect pair. They enjoy going to music class, dancing, playing peek-a-boo, going to play-dates and playing with their two dogs.

Feature Articles:

13 Tips to Teach Kids Love. The Power of Positive Parenting by *Diane Lang* _____ 7

Be Prepared for the Placement of Multiples in School by *John R. Mascazine, Ph.D.* _____ 24

Tips on Twins & Kitchen Safety by *Shane Borrowman* _____ 28



SPECIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION SECTION

Let's Celebrate...Twin

Birthday Ideas by *Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D.* _____ 18

Throwing Twin Birthday Parties & Tips to Consider by *Steven Jeffries* _____ 20

Birthday Fun... Make a Birthday Banner for your twins _____ 22

In Every Issue:

A Note from the Editor _____ 3

NEWS _____ 4

Mailbox _____ 6

Double Takes _____ 30

Twins Bookshelf/Shop Featured Products _____ 34

18 Let's Celebrate...Twin Birthday Ideas



10 The Genetic Ties to Your Pregnancy



16 WANTED: Some Peace and Quiet



24 Be Prepared for the Placement of Multiples in School



27 Are Things Too Hectic? Define Your Focus



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TWINS Magazine Celebrates 29-years with this issue!



Happy 2013!
 It's hard to believe another year has gone by here at TWINS Magazine and also in my own personal life! My twin boys will soon be celebrating their 15th birthday in a couple of weeks and they are now both taller than me!

It seems like it was just yesterday that I was holding them both in my arms as tiny preemie infants or chasing them around in separate directions as active and busy toddlers, yet now they are maturing and growing into fine young men. But I do have to wonder how did this happen so fast? Where did the time go? I recently saw a quote that I absolutely love that said, "To Be in Your Child's Memories Tomorrow, You Have to Be in Their Lives today!" So remember that despite all of those busy, hectic and crazy days when you feel overwhelmed and your to-do list is longer than your arm, be sure to carve out special time to spend with your kids because they will remember those times fondly and the effort you made.

Did you know that it was 1984 when TWINS Magazine published its very first issue? Although some of you may not have even been born yet or were just mere toddlers or pre-teens at the time, the 80's were filled with innovation and excitement. You have to remember this was years before the internet, Google, smart phones and I-pads! At that time, information on rearing twins/multiples was extremely scarce and there weren't hardly any resources available to busy parents needing and seeking out tips and advice on this important and vast topic. Bob and Barbara Unell, parents of 3-year-old twins, identified this great need and had a dream to create a new forum just for us—parents with twins. So from their offices in Kansas City, Kansas they first launched TWINS and gave thousands of parents of multiples everywhere a new way to connect, share and learn more about everything relating to having and raising twins/multiples! It was in that first year when Co-founder/Editor Barbara Unell shared with readers in her editor's note:

I have always wanted to wave a magic wand and instantly turn my dreams into reality. It has been my dream and priority for a long time to launch this

magazine. For the past six months, our TWINS writers and staff have found ways to make this dream come true for me. It's sitting in your hands this very moment – tugging at the heartstrings, sharing helpful words, lending a supportive hand or offering a comforting thought to those in need. From my perspective this is what TWINS is all about. TWINS helps research touch ears and eyes of those who can use it, giving new meaning to the word "support", says one of our readers. "For the first time, I have my own experiences to share with others sitting right on my coffee table, just like all of my friends." Many subscribers tell us that they knew they couldn't be the only one with problems raising their twins... TWINS proves they are not! 'Now that TWINS is here, I feel confident that parents of twins all over the world feel like I do – many different ways all in one day!' says one mother of twins. I'm proud of our staff, our writers, and our magazine. And I share these letters with you here because I am also proud and delighted with you – our readers. When news of our magazine reached your doors you wasted no time in helping shape it to serve you and others. You gave us ideas you'd like researched to educate yourself as well as all parents of multiples. You want to keep the magazine as effective as possible, as in touch with the feelings of parents of multiples as it can be... And so do we. With features helping parents meet the challenges of carrying and giving birth to multiples we are meeting your needs. And parents of multiples and professionals from all over the world are telling us to keep up the good work. We plan to! For one reason – to never forget we are in the business of giving—support, information and opportunities for parents to grow as individuals and as mothers and fathers.

Now, 29 years later, we continue to publish TWINS with this ideal in mind. We are still in the business of giving—giving support, giving information and giving opportunities for parents of multiples everywhere. Although TWINS has grown and evolved over the years and has had to adapt to the changing times, it is truly because of your loyalty and support we have remained the world's leading parenting resource for twins, triplets and higher-order multiples for almost three decades! We have a bright future and are keeping Barbara's dream alive with plans to continue offering the latest and greatest information, resources and support all parents of twins/multiples need in the early years of parenting for many more years to come. So come celebrate with us all year long and we hope you enjoy the ride!

Sincerely,

Christa Reed

Did You Know?

TWINS Magazine has a NEW phone number!
Our NEW Toll-Free Phone Number is:

1-855-75-TWINS

www.TwinsMagazine.com

'Dear Abby' Advice Columnist Dies at Age 94

At the age of 94, "Dear Abby" aka: Pauline Friedman Phillips, who under the name of Abigail Van Buren wrote the long-running "Dear Abby" advice column that was followed by millions of newspaper readers throughout the world, has died after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. For decades, Phillips' column competed with the advice column written by her twin sister, Ann Landers, Esther Friedman Lederer. They were born on July 4, 1918 in Sioux City, Iowa. Their relationship was stormy in their early adult years, but later they regained the close relationship they had growing up. The two columns differed in style. Ann Landers responded to questioners with homey, detailed advice. Abby's replies were often more flippant one-liners. Either way, these twins reached millions of people and changed the way society viewed tough subjects.

It was 29 years ago in the very first year of publishing TWINS Magazine when we featured an interview from both of these dynamic ladies Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren where they shared their first-hand views on what it was like to be a twin and offered advice for parents of twins...

Since we are celebrating our 29th birthday with this edition, we thought it would be fun to include a few excerpts from that feature article originally published in TWINS Magazine in November/December 1984. Before TWINS Magazine started there was hardly any information accessible and available for parents having and raising twins/multiples—the entire reason the magazine was born and thankfully after 29 years, we are still providing valuable information and resources dedicated to the sole purpose of supporting, educating, entertaining and engaging parents of twins and multiples throughout the world! It's amazing to see how far we have come since then!



Twin sisters & advice columnists Ann Landers (Esther Eppie Lederer), left, and Dear Abby (Pauline Phillips, aka Abigail Van Buren) in 1976

TWINS Magazine Archives—excerpts from Abigail Van Buren "Dear Abby's" perspective...

From the day we were born, we were known as the "Friedman Twins". From my earliest recollections we were a team. We looked alike, talked alike, thought alike, and Mama always dressed us alike. We were precocious, mischievous, talkative, extroverted and cute. We were also creative. As children we were constantly collaborating on poems, parodies and witty letters. During our high school and college years the Friedman twins were known as life of the party—never at a loss for words. If one of us couldn't come up with a witty rejoinder or a snappy comeback, the other one could. We were not only good talkers, we were good listeners. We always had more boyfriends than girlfriends. But that didn't bother us. We had each other.

We twins were the youngest of four daughters and the only two who pursued professional careers. After graduation from high school my twin sister and I enrolled at Morningside, the local college. We had dreams of going to Northwestern University but were told we couldn't afford it. Because we enjoyed writing, we signed up for the journalism course in our freshman year. We immediately started writing for the college weekly, and together we originated a lively little gossip column which we named "The Campus Rat." We also took courses in philosophy, biology, English literature, and theology, but the only degrees we hold today are honorary, because we both dropped out our junior year of college to marry. On July 2, 1939 (just two days before their twenty-first birthday), the Friedman twins co-starred in a spectacular double-feature wedding. It was a production the likes of which Sioux City had never seen before—or since. There was standing-room only in the flower-filled synagogue where friends and family had come to see a very proud father walk down the aisle with a twin bride on each arm.

TWINS Magazine Archives—excerpts from Ann Lander's perspective...

Years before I dreamed of becoming an advice columnist, I promised myself I would one day write a book on rearing twins. I know how it looks from the inside, because my twin sister and I were practically Siamese from the day we were born to the day we married—and naturally it was a double wedding! I have attempted to read everything available on the subject of twins. I have observed twins, questioned their parents, siblings, their friends and teachers. I also have received a great many letters from twins. It is disturbing to me that in the past 20 years, I have encountered so few twins whose parents are doing an enlightened job of raising them. I do not say this in criticism. If the parents knew better, they would do better. But unfortunately, there has been precious little information available to help parents raise twins.

The most common and most damaging error is to assume that because twins came into the world together they must be dressed alike, encouraged to do the same things, and instructed to stick together, come what may. This is precisely what should NOT be done. It is of course easier to treat twins as a single unit rather than as two individuals. It requires extra time and energy and imagination to steer children of the same age in separate directions. It is infinitely simpler for the parents of twins to go everywhere together, share each other's friends, clothes, and interests. And then, too, twins boost the parental ego. It makes them feel "special" so how do you let the world know? By dressing your twins alike, parading them as a unit, and keeping them together. This may do wonders for mama and papa but it triggers serious problems for the twins.

My number one rule for rearing twins:

DO NOT DRESS THEM ALIKE! Dressing twins alike is exploitative and it is destructive. Why? It's destructive because it is an attention-getting device to accentuate their similarities. This defeats the prime objective, which is to encourage the development of separate personalities. When I have suggested in my column that twins not be dressed alike, irate mothers let me know in no uncertain terms that their twins want to dress alike. Of course they do. But the mothers should not permit it.

My number two rule: SEPARATE TWINS IN SCHOOL IF IT IS POSSIBLE.

Twins in a classroom (a) get more than their share of attention (b) confuse the teacher (c) lean on one another for support (d) work less effectively than if they were strictly on their own. After being separated against our will for the very first time in junior high and realizing we secretly enjoyed the separation, in high school my twin sister and I had the privilege of selecting subjects and teachers, and I am sorry to say we slipped back to the sure-fire, attention-getting tricks. We selected every course together. For the next three years we were side by side in every class—confusing the teachers, overwhelming the boys, antagonizing the girls, and playing the double exposure for all it was worth!

My number three rule: ENCOURAGE TWINS TO FOLLOW SEPARATE INTERESTS AND DEVELOP THEIR INDIVIDUAL TALENTS

Because two people may look alike to the casual observer does not mean that they think alike or that they have identical personalities, work habits, or talents. My twin sister and I both studied violin. Half of our dear father's money was wasted. The half spent on lessons on me went down the drain. I had little interest in the violin, but it takes two to make a duet and I guess we did look pretty cute playing our violins together. It was small wonder my sister played the violin better than I. In addition to having a natural talent for the instrument, which I lacked, she took a good many more lessons. My twin frequently substituted for me because I didn't like to practice. I realized now that I lacked the initiative in my teen years to develop my own special talents—writing and public speaking. Instead of fiddling around with the fiddle and being part of a duet, I should have been on the debate team, working on yearbook or writing editorials for the school paper. With the proper

guidance, I might have found my place many years earlier.

My number four rule: SEPARATE FIELD OF ENDEAVOR WILL AVOID HEAD-ON-CLASHES OR—WORSE YET—BELOW THE SURFACE HOSTILITIES

In my opinion, twins should not compete in the same career field or go to the same college together. Such competition may produce a champion, but it is far more important to produce two healthy personalities. Twins often compete on many levels and if they are too tied up with one another and too competitive, if separated, their interests would fan out in a variety of healthy directions.

My number five rule: DO NOT COMPARE ONE TWIN WITH THE OTHER AND DO NOT PERMIT FRIENDS AND RELATIVES TO DO IT

I grew up with a pair of deep dimples. My twin sister had no dimples. Thoughtless people often said to her, "How does it happen that your twin has dimples and you don't have any?" I can't say for certain how my twin felt on hearing this insane question hundreds of times—but I can imagine. No mention should be made on differences between twins. If one twin boy is smaller than his brother, you can bet he is sensitive about it. On one occasion I heard an adult ask a nine-year-old who was noticeably smaller than his twin brother, "Why don't you grow faster and catch up with your twin brother?" The child was crestfallen and stood silent. My blood pressure had risen about 20 points, and I turned to the adult and said, "What's so special about being bigger than somebody? I always went for the short fellows myself. What counts is not being short on brains. That boy looked at me with the most grateful eyes I'd ever seen. "Gee," he beamed, "I'll have to remember that one!"

Charlotte Eisgrou & Ann Primack Are Oldest Living Identical Twins at the Age of 103...

Interestingly, Eisgrou and Primack are the second oldest twins in the world, born 39 days after non-identical twins Edith Ritchie and Evelyn Middleton from Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The world's oldest living identical twins recently celebrated their 103 birthday! Charlotte Eisgrou and Ann Primack of South Florida and Daytona Beach, Fla. are still in the best of health, despite their age. Neither uses a hearing aide or reading glasses, reported the Daily Mail. Although the pair was unable to spend their birthday together since they are both recovering from recent falls, they still consider each other best friends. It was way back in the year 1909 in Chicago, Illinois when the twins were born two months premature and only weighed a combined 7 lbs. Since they were born before incubators were



Continued on page 26

See what EVERYONE is talking about!
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Technology Helps Twins Celebrate 20th Birthday!

Dear Editor:

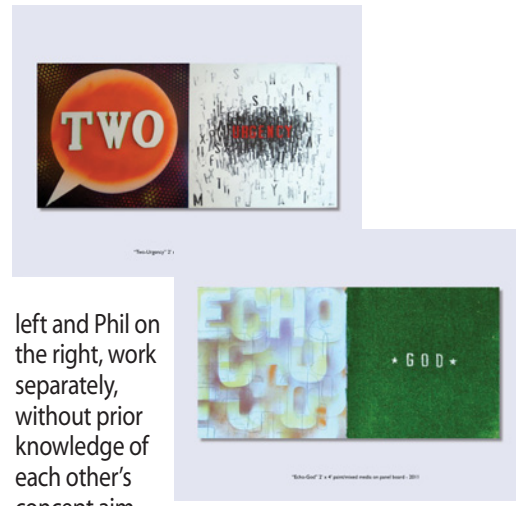
Happy Birthday TWINS Magazine! I wanted to send you this picture of my 20-year-old twins Colin and Taylor Eberl-Coe. On their birthday last May they were apart for the very first time when Colin was in Europe for a semester abroad and Taylor was in school at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. To stay connected the twins would often skype each other—the next best thing to being there in person. Colin was the one who was on the laptop studying in Liverpool, England, when they “skyped” their happy birthday celebration so they could share their big



When we were born there was quite a size difference as you can see. I’m the bigger twin weighing in at 9 pounds 3 ounces and my co-twin Mike was only 5 pounds 4 ounces. We are identical twins and I am still bigger than him to this day. I am on the left and mike is on the right. Thanks for your time

Thanks,
Tony Ferraro
Sent from my iPhone

Editor’s Response: *Thanks for your email Tony. Often, when identical twins have this much of a weight difference at birth, your mother could have been afflicted with TTTS (Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome) when identical twins that share the same placenta also share blood vessels and one twin gets too much the other does not get enough! I imagine 21 years ago, doctors had no idea what to look for or how to treat TTTS even if they saw the babies on an ultrasound!*



left and Phil on the right, work separately, without prior knowledge of each other’s concept aiming to discover the creative connections in our DNA. The only rule being our respective “side” has to contain one word. The work is then revealed. Paul works in Reston, VA. Phil in Lake Forest, IL. The result is an eclectic set of paintings that show an innate connectivity in color and idea demonstrating the power of being a twin. You can find more information at our site: <http://philg57.wix.com/this-is-my-side>

We believe it is more than just a show it really is an exciting experiment in “twin-nydom.”

Thanks for listening!
Phil Gayter



day together—it was the first time the twins had ever celebrated their birthdays apart and I thought it would be fun to share this photo with your readers!

Sincerely,
Amy Eberl-Coe (Mom via email)
Arvada, Colorado

Could Now Adult Twins Been Afflicted by TTTS at Birth?

Dear Editor:



My name is Tony Ferraro and I am 21 years old from Pittsburgh, PA. I have a twin brother named Mike and I just wanted to share this picture with you guys in case it sparked any interest.

Unique Identical Twin Art Show in Lake Forest!

Dear TWINS Magazine:



We thought you might be interested in this unique art show created by my twin and I. Here’s the premise: We each take a 4’ x 2’ panel board and with Paul painting on the

Olsen Twins Look-a-Likes!

Dear TWINS Magazine:

Here is a picture I took of my 4 1/2 year old twins. It is funny how they remind me of the Olsen twins. Especially in this picture!

Teresa Heinnickel
Via email



13 Tips to Teach Kids Love

by Diane Lang

The Power of Positive Parenting

Kids have so much to teach us, so much we forget as reality takes over. We need to learn how to love everything around us: life, earth, others, etc. Kids know how to forgive, release and let go. So positive parenting isn't about teaching how to love, it's teaching kids to hold onto their love and reminding them how great life is. Kids are born with the knowledge of love not fear! As parents we need to remind them of this. Here are 13 tips to teach kids love through positive parenting:

- 1. Teach kids through example.** Be the example, the role model, the mentor. Show the personality traits you want your kids to have. If you show kids love, warmth, kindness, patience and empathy, you will get it in return.
- 2. Teach them to want not to need.** Teaching love is to remind kids they don't need to be attached to any material objects and to be grateful for what they have.
- 3. Discipline is love.** It shows your child you care.
- 4. Show love by being honest.** It's okay to say I don't know. Be honest, clear, simple and to the point.
- 5. Show loyalty through actions.** Make sure to give daily hugs, kisses, pats on the shoulder, hold hands, etc. Show love to your spouse; let your kids know there is a lot of love in the family.
- 6. Show kids love through praise.** Let them know how proud of them you are with praise. Praise your child's efforts so they stay motivated and don't give up.
- 7. Show them love through listening.** Be an active listener: use eye contact, don't interrupt, show your listening with nods of the head, non verbal gestures, summarize what you just heard and ask questions.
- 8. Show your empathy by being an empathetic listener.** Even if you don't understand why your kids are

upset, be empathetic. Put yourself in their shoes. Imagine how they must feel. Respond with empathy.

- 9. Show love through communication.** Ask how they are doing, what kind of day they had, how was school? Ask questions that involve more than a yes or no answer and be a great active, empathetic listener when communicating with children.
- 10. Teach kids to remain their authentic self and share their inner joy and light.** We need to teach kids to hold onto their lightness.
- 11. Teach kids to be compassionate with random acts of kindness.** Get kids involved in volunteering at an early age. When kids perform random acts of kindness they feel more respect for themselves and get a boost of happiness.
- 12. Teach your kids to love healthy foods by eating meals together.** Let your kids be involved in the process. They can help make the menu, help with food shopping and even cooking. The more involved they are, the more likely they are to eat healthy and enjoy it. Teach kids to respect their body which is their true home.
- 13. Teach kids that mistakes are good.** Mistakes are teachable moments that move us forward into a better path.

Diane Lang - Positive Living Expert and psychotherapist - is a nationally recognized author, educator, speaker, therapist and media expert. In addition to holding multiple counseling positions, Diane is also an adjunct professor at Montclair State University. Lang has been interviewed for numerous magazine and newspaper articles and has been a frequent guest on radio and TV shows.

TWINS Magazine LOVES supporting family businesses owned and operated by twins or parents of twins/multiples so we are starting this NEW feature called Twin Biz Spotlight Q & A! If you know businesses connected to "twins" then let us know about them by emailing Christa Reed, Editor-in-Chief at twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com.

Introducing *Twin Sisters Productions*

Q: What is the name of your business and how did you come up with your concept?

Business Name: Twin Sisters Productions

A: Kim- It all started with an assignment I had while earning my Master's degree in Integrating the Arts into the curriculum. I wanted to create an educational song that would both complete my assignment and help my elementary students learn the math facts. I wrote "Rap with the Facts" and my students loved it! It made learning math much easier and more fun! Between my professor's suggestions, an overwhelming demand for the rap and Karen's encouragement, we found ourselves working with an arranger. We founded Twin Sisters Productions in 1987.

Karen- We chose Twin Sisters Productions because we wanted our company's name to reflect that we are fraternal twins. Since we were starting an educational company,

Q: Where is your location, phone # and what is your company website URL?

A: Stow, Ohio, 1-800-TWIN(8946), www.twinsisters.com

Q: How long have you been in business and what products/services do you offer?

A: We are actually celebrating our 25th anniversary this year. Our ever-expanding product line includes apps, digital music, e-books, read- and sing-along books, CDs, floor puzzles and educational workbooks. Over the years, these products have been nationally recognized with over 170 awards by the Record Industry Association of America, National Parenting Publications, Association of Educational Publishers,

Parents' Choice and others.

Q: What are your estimated annual sales?

A: Approx \$8.0 million dollars

Q: How is it working with your co-twin? How do you resolve conflicts in business?

A: Karen- We love working together. We rarely disagree, and when we do, whoever has the strongest opinion on the subject wins. However this is rare.

Q: What tips or advice can you give others wanting to go into business?

A: Karen- Sometimes you just have to go for it, though perseverance is a critical component to success.
 Kim- Starting a company is not for the "weak-minded." It takes hard work, dedication, an "I can do anything attitude" and a great support system.

Q: What has been the best thing about running your business?

A: Karen- It has allowed us to be creative, work around family needs and work together.
 Kim- It has also enabled us to help children through our fund-raising efforts and by giving away products to schools in need. As a company we have been tremendously blessed, so we give back by helping children locally and around the world. We support Summit County Royal Kids' Camp, an annual summer camp for abused children, and Living Hope International, an organization dedicated to providing orphaned and abandoned Chinese children caregivers and a home.



Q: What is the downside?

A: Karen- Sometimes it is all consuming and difficult to separate your work life from your personal life.

Kim- We never "turn off", whenever we're together. We talk about ideas, new directions, product ideas, sales strategies and where we're headed even if we aren't at work.

Q: What are the names, ages of your multiples/children?

A: Karen has a son Tyler who is 22. Kim has a son Austin, 18, and two daughters Morgan, 16, and Bailey, 10.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: Kim- Having a twin is the greatest blessing. We live just around the corner from one another and see each other everyday. After seeing how close Karen and I are, both of my girls have mentioned that they wished they had a twin. Unless you have a twin, it's hard to explain. It's a magical closeness, a true gift!

Here are just a few samples of the great products from Twin Sisters

Nature Sounds CD



Enjoy 60 minutes of our original music blended with soft rain showers, gentle winds, sea gulls, song birds, a beating heart and other sounds of nature. This RIAA Certified Platinum record, meaning over 1,000,000 albums sold, is perfect for you and baby during quiet times.



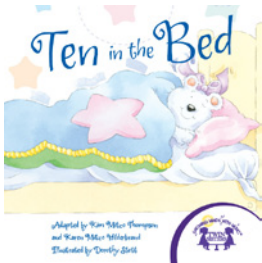
I Love You More Board Board with CD

With a gentle kiss, Mama Bear puts Little Bear to bed. "I love you" turns into a precious game between Mama Bear and Little Bear, as they come up with many "I love you more" ideas. Make this tender book part of your bedtime routine, then create your own "I love you more" examples with your child!



Alphabet Workbook with Music CD

Twelve fun songs teach the alphabet, initial consonant sounds and more! Practice identifying, tracing and writing each letter of the alphabet in this full-color, 48-page workbook.



Ten in the Bed E-Book (Chose this one because it was a PIA winner) What happens when ten adorable teddy bears cuddle, laugh and roll over together in the big, comfy bed? Children will laugh as they learn to count to 10 in the delightfully illustrated book! Words are highlighted as read and page corners turn upwards

when it's time to turn the page, making it easy to read along. Available on Nook, iBooks, Google Books and more!



Jonah and the Whale Floor Puzzle –

Available in March
Jonah, the whale and all the little sea creatures come to life on this jumbo-sized, 48-piece puzzle! The adorably-illustrated set also includes a 20-song inspirational CD and a downloadable read-along activity book. Children will love learning about Jonah's valuable lesson in obedience and forgiveness with God!



102 Children's Songs

This best-selling 3-CD boxed set earned a RIAA Certified Gold Record for over 500,000 units sold! From classic children's songs to original learning songs that teach colors, shapes, letters, numbers and more, children will love singing along to all 102 songs! Lyrics included on PDF download.

Baby-Proofing Shopping List

As you survey your home, check the items you'll need to complete your childproofing efforts.

What to buy...

Cabinet and drawer latches and locks

Toilet Locks

Covers for electrical outlets

Security Gates

Car Seats

Full-length bath mat and spout guard

Soft inflated tub-knob covers

Stove guard

Colorful decals

Wall hook

Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors

What to know...

Don't store cleaning supplies under the sink, even if it's locked.

Lock up all toilets to prevent drowning.

Help prevent tots from putting fingers or objects into the outlet.

Use pressure gates only between rooms. Install permanent gates at the top and bottoms of stairs.

Be sure to learn your local car-seat laws.

Face Baby away from the faucet when he's in the tub.

Cover Cold- and hot-water handles to prevent child from turning on the water.

Use to prevent child from reaching or touching stove.

Affix to glass doors to make glass visible.

Use to hold long phone cords out of children's reach.

Get the facts on fire safety and carbon monoxide.

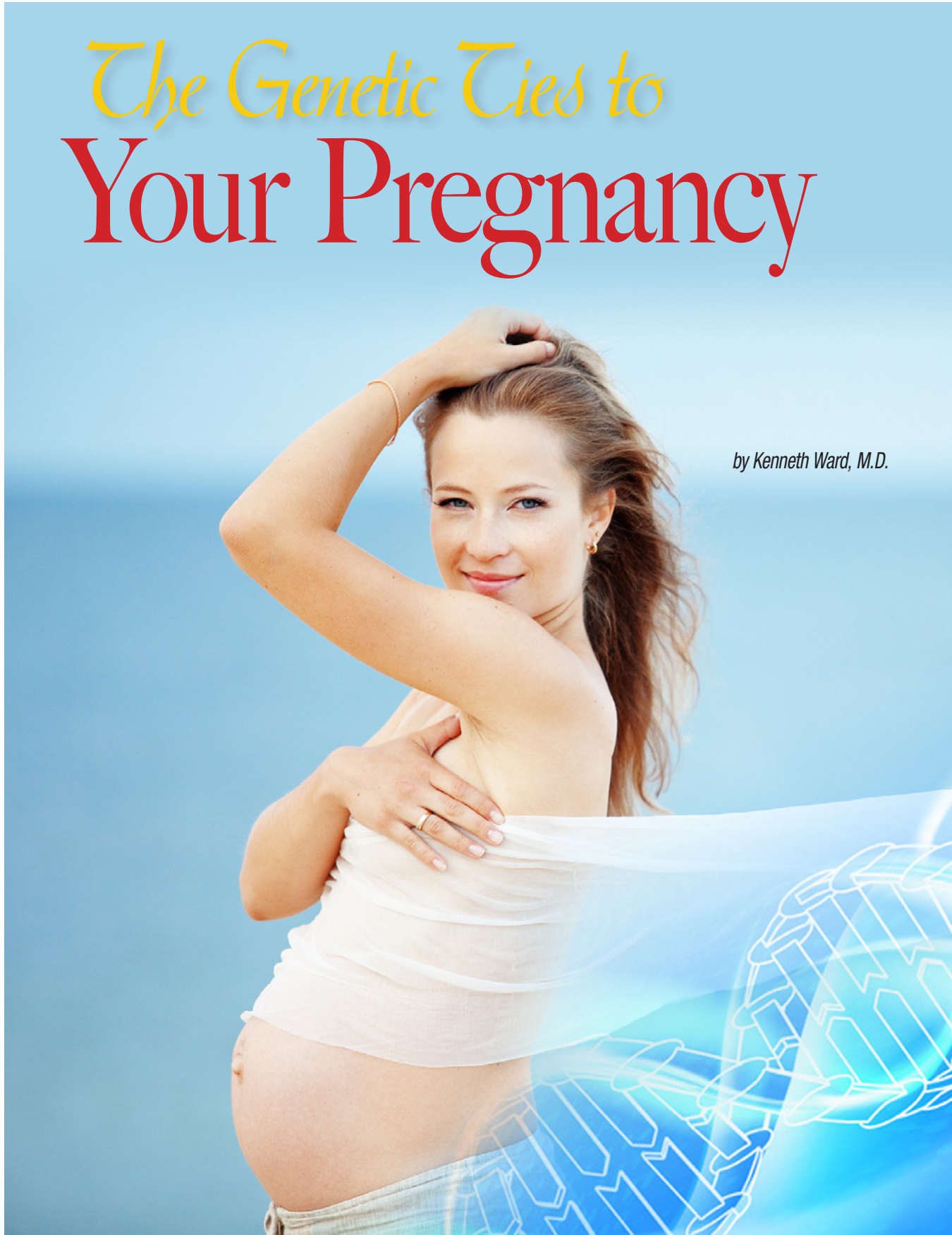




PREGNANCY

The Genetic Ties to **Your Pregnancy**

by Kenneth Ward, M.D.



All of us do everything we can during pregnancy to ensure that healthy babies come into the world. However, some things that influence our pregnancies and, therefore, our children's lives, are totally out of our control and responsibility. These are the traits (and diseases) that have genes at their roots. Research has proven that twins are a key to understanding whether a trait or disease does, in fact, have this influence on it. Genetic researchers analyze the occurrence of a disease (or trait) in twins to learn whether a particular problem under study might be affected by one's genetic makeup. It has been proven, for example, that there are important genetic influences on the structure of our bodies, their chemistries, and even our intelligence and behavior.

A GENETIC ROOT OF TWIN PREGNANCY?

Twin genetic analyses have even taught us that the complex process of twinning itself may be "genetic". This was suspected because there are tremendous racial variations in the incidence of twins—especially fraternal twins. For instance, the Yoruba tribe in Africa has a 20-fold higher rate of twinning, compared with the Japanese population. Fraternal twinning definitely runs in families. For instance, the sister of a woman who delivered fraternal twins has 1.7 times the chance of conceiving fraternal twins, compared to the general population.

Similarly, a woman whose mother is a fraternal twin will be 2.5 times as likely as the general population to conceive fraternal twins. It is suspected, but not yet proven, that families with many fraternal twins have genes which cause women in the family to have higher levels of the FSH hormone which causes the ovary to produce a mature egg.

IMPACT ON OUR TRAITS

Usually, there are millions of differences in the genetic instructions (at the DNA level) between any two individuals, even when the individuals are close relatives. Twin genetic studies depend on the fact that monozygotic, or identical twins have all of their genes in common because they started out as a single conception. Dizygotic or fraternal twins, on the other hand, are genetically no more similar than other siblings. In general, both identical and fraternal twins have shared environments, since they usually grow up in the same household.

As a first approximation, identical twins can give an estimate of the effect of shared genes, and fraternal twins can give an estimate of the effect of shared environment. As an additional twist, by only studying twins who happen, through adoption, to have been raised apart, the effect of shared environment can be largely taken out of the analysis, giving a purer estimate of the strength of the genetic factor.

For example, in identical twins, I.Q. tests tend to correlate very highly. In fact, the correlation is as high as retesting the same individual over and over again. This degree of correlation is much greater than that observed for fraternal twins or other siblings.

Twin studies produce a numeric measurement of how genetic a trait is, called the "heritability ratio". This number between zero and one suggests how much of the trait is environmental and how much is genetic. As the heritability ratio approaches zero, the trait is primarily environmental. As it approaches one, the trait is primarily genetic.

IMPACT ON DISEASE

Studies of diabetic twins show that there is a pronounced difference in the genetics of the childhood-onset and adult-onset forms. If one identical twin has adult-onset diabetes, the other is likely to develop late onset diabetes (high heritability ratio). With childhood-onset diabetes, the familial susceptibility is much weaker (low heritability ratio), and additional environmental factors are clearly required for the diabetes to develop.

Twin studies have taught us that many diseases which are not usually considered "genetic" such as atherosclerosis or cancer—have powerful genetic influences. For instance, schizophrenia has a heritability ratio in the range of 0.6 to 0.7, and manic depressive illness has a heritability ratio very close to 1. Similarly, many birth defects such as a cleft lip, club foot or congenital heart defects are highly genetic. These genetic tendencies have been best quantified by doing twin studies.

Unfortunately, even though a twin study tells us that something might be genetic, it does not tell us which genes are involved or how those genes work, or how they might be transmitted through a family. There are also difficulties and errors which can arise in twin studies due to the shared environment issues. Nonetheless, twin studies remain one of the most useful ways to study the inheritance of complex traits in humans. ♥



Protecting them against **RSV**

This respiratory virus is much more serious than the common cold

by Richard Leonard, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Richard Leonard, M.D., F.A.A.P. of Phoenix, Arizona is a pediatrician and the father of twin girls.

Two years ago, an otherwise uneventful pregnancy had suddenly become high risk when my wife developed preeclampsia and went into premature labor at 32 weeks gestation. As a pediatrician, I was well aware of the complications of prematurity and was reassured when, they were in the delivery room—pink as rosebuds, unaided by oxygen or other tools of modern medical technology.

When the girls were 2-weeks-old we took them home. While our accountant was ecstatic about their pre-new-year-appearance, I was quite concerned about avoiding the respiratory illnesses that are prevalent each winter. From November to March, even in balmy Phoenix, my colleagues and I see many infants with severe respiratory illnesses, such as respiratory syncytial virus or RSV. While some of these babies suffer no lasting effects, these illnesses can have serious long-term effects. Sometimes they're even fatal. That first year I was especially worried about exposing our premature girls to RSV.

TRANSMITTED BY CLOSE CONTACT

A common respiratory virus, RSV, must be taken seriously. Depending on the severity of the infection, a child with RSV may require hospitalization. During the worst seasons, RSV infection may reach epidemic proportions. The winter our children were born was one of the worst. Hospitals were so full that, at one point, several patients were on waiting lists for hours or days. Vulnerability may be greater with multiples, many of whom have underlying problems, such as heart disease or prematurity complicated by bronchopulmonary dysplasia, a sequel of respiratory distress of prematurity.

In adults or older children, RSV may cause only a cough or other mild respiratory symptoms, such as a runny nose. In younger children, especially in infants less than a year old, the symptoms can be more serious. These include wheezing, shortness of breath, fever and irritability. RSV may even cause a child to stop breathing for seconds at a time or lead to lung disease.

RSV, like other respiratory viruses, such as influenza, is transmitted by close contact with carriers who may have no ideas of the danger they present—either because they are asymptomatic or because the disease is in the incubation period. Even when symptoms are not present, carriers can infect others. When people sneeze, cough or even talk, they propel microscopic droplets across the room. These droplets can infect vulnerable infants and small children. Most people forget that viruses are also transferred by contaminated objects, such as toys.

TAKING PRECAUTIONS

Knowing the dangers of RSV and how it is spread, we took some precautions to minimize the risk of viral illnesses during our twin girls' first winter. Following these precautions will help minimize the risk of contagion:

- **Keep them at home**

Study after study has proven that without a doubt, children kept at home have fewer viral illnesses than those in day care.

This also means fewer complications of viral illnesses, especially ear infections, the bane of many parents. A period at home is especially helpful when the children are born during the winter flu season. It may not be as important when children are born in the spring or summer. When both parents work, keeping children at home, even for a limited time, may have major economic impact. I have often noted the relief and joy some parents experience when they decide to put off that new car or bigger house while one of them stays at home during the early months of their multiples' lives.

• Discourage sick visitors

When our twins were newborns, we discouraged ill visitors, as well as children in general since they are often incubating a virus even when asymptomatic. Not wanting to offend friends and family, we did our best to explain why we were being so protective. Families with older children should try to keep drippy noses away from babies' faces. While it may not be easy to do, consider enlisting the help of your children's playmates' parents. See if they will agree to have your children over more during that first winter so you can minimize your babies' exposure to viruses. Of course, you'll have to agree to have their children over more often during the summer. This was all worth it when we remember the RSV cases I had diagnosed.

• Keep strangers away

We also learned to protect the girls from the well-meaning attentions of strangers who are drawn to twins. When we did take them out in the early months, we often kept the stroller canopies up to camouflage them. This avoided both unwanted viruses and overstimulation.

• Always wash up

Some exposure is unavoidable, even for the most cautious families. I tried to minimize germs by washing well when I left the office each day. Remind members of your household and healthy visitors to wash their hands frequently.

These strategies coupled with lots of good luck, got our tiny twin girls through their first year with only a few minor illnesses. With tender loving care, I'm confident your multiples will, too. ♥

TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

When is a cold just a cold? I thought I knew the answer to that question. However, soon after the birth of my twin sons, I found out just how wrong I had been. As the mother of two singletons born before the twins, I had seen my share of colds. I'd seen it all. Little did I know what was in my future...

MORE THAN A COLD

Matthew, one of our 7-month-old twins, had a slight fever and runny nose. I thought he was coming down with a cold, so I gave him some ibuprofen for the fever and started the humidifier for his congestion. But soon congestion hadn't diminished, and he had started wheezing. Something told me this was more than a cold.

By the afternoon, Matthew was wheezing continuously, so I took him in to the pediatrician. After examining Matthew, the doctor ordered a breathing treatment. His doctor suspected respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a serious infection.

TREATING RSV

RSV was especially dangerous for Matthew because he was less than a year old. It caused the small tubes in his lungs to become inflamed, restricting the flow of air. As a result, Matthew struggled with each breath. He was given breathing treatments, which seemed to relieve some of wheezing and helped him breathe easier. However, this treatment only had a temporary effect. To make certain that Matthew's lungs didn't close up again, his doctor sent us home with our own breathing machine.

RSV can be deadly if the lungs close up, so our doctor was very concerned. He instructed me to go immediately to the emergency room if Matthew's breathing became worse. One minute he sounded better and the next I was ready to rush him to the hospital. I quickly became familiar with the breathing treatments, and throughout the night I faithfully got up every four hours to give them to my son.

The next morning he was still wheezing and wasn't able to drink his bottles. It didn't take long for his doctor to hospitalize him. At the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU), Matthew was immediately given oxygen. In a matter of minutes, his coloring improved from a dusky gray to a pale pink. The nurse put an IV in while the respiratory therapist gave Matthew a breathing treatment.

After two days in the PICU, his fever subsided. The treatments were working and his wheezing had stopped. He was still on oxygen and suffered from terrible coughing spells, but he looked much better.

On day three he was released from the hospital. Once home, I was able to relax because our twins were together again. I was so happy to see Joshua. I quickly went to give him a hug and a kiss. I could immediately feel that he was running a fever; Joshua had also contracted RSV!

ROUND TWO

It wasn't long before Joshua was hospitalized. The nurses did a double take when they saw us, thinking I had returned with Matthew. Joshua was sicker than his brother had been. His fever ran so high that his little cheeks appeared sunburned. Our little boy desperately fought for each breath he took. After a few more days in the PICU, Joshua began to improve. The fever had gone, and the wheezing subsided. Joshua was going to be fine.

PROTECTION EQUALS PREVENTION

Luckily, my twin boys recovered from RSV. I learned that the only protection is through prevention. I will always remember our two close encounters with RSV.

Submitted by Lisa Weg, North Hills, California



CHOMP

Five tips for dealing with children who bite

by Laura Sky Brown

Laura Sky Brown of Ann Arbor, Michigan is a part-time editor and mother of three, including boy/girl twins born in 1999.

Few things can make a parent's heart skip a beat like the sight of fresh teeth marks in skin. What makes toddlers bite, anyway, and what can you do about it? Parenting books and experiences parents agree that biting incidents usually start sometime soon after teething and peak at 15 to 18 months, when toddlers have teeth but don't yet have the verbal skills they need to express themselves easily. The book

Positive Discipline A to Z, revised and expanded 2nd edition: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems by Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn explains that "children who bite often do so when they become frustrated in social situations and do not know how to express themselves in acceptable ways. Children also may bite their parents and think it's a game." Stuart Kirsch of Middleborough, Mass., had that problem with twins Jason & Rina. "Jason would bully and push Rina around, and her response was to bite back." At least they kept a sense of humor. "We used to joke that when it was time to go to the dentist we'd only have to take Jason because the dentist could see the imprint of Rina's teeth on his arms." If one of more of your children has started expressing themselves through biting, you may be tempted to bite back, but here are some better ideas to get you through this challenging stage.

1. Watch for Warning signs and plan ahead

You can probably tell when your child is getting frustrated or on the edge of crankiness. It's helpful to try to notice in advance when a biting incident may occur. Terry Kusche of Loudonville, NY, knows exactly what sets off her 16-month-old twins Sean & Matthew: frustration or fatigue. And she knows why. "The biting came on as a response to not being able to verbalize anything. Matthew would bite Sean when they are behind a [baby] gate and cannot get to me or one twin when the other has a toy he wants. Matthew will generally bite first because he gets frustrated more easily." Think about how you can keep your children from becoming frustrated and over stimulated. If they are in a crabby mood, maybe this is not the day to make them share their toys or wait too long for your attention. In *What to Expect in the Toddler Years* by Arlene Eisenberg, Heide E. Murkoff and Sandee E. Hathaway suggestions are given for curbing aggression:



Supervise your toddlers' play closely, take breaks each day for quiet time, avoid intense one-on-one play during your children's most tired time of day and provide acceptable outlets like running, jumping, dancing, or even pillow fights for that pent-up energy.

Kusche has learned a few things about planning ahead. "I have found if I keep the kids busy they are less likely to bite. My boys are very physical children, so they like to be very active. It helps to vary their days with outside time, errand and shopping time, and indoor time so they don't get bored or stuck on the same things, which I have found leads to their getting frustrated more quickly. Toys that they seem to fight over I have two of, but this is not always a solution because they will still want the other's toy, even if it is the same." Because Kusche knows how to predict a biting incident at her house, she can often stop it before it happens. "With a close eye" she says, "I can get through the day bite free."

2. Look for the good side of your kids

It's especially important for parents of multiples to avoid labeling one child good and the other bad, even though one child is usually the aggressor against the other. If you react too intensely, the aggressor may continue biting just to get your attention. In the words of radio psychologist Dr. Joy Brown, "Children would rather be praised than punished, but they would rather be punished than ignored." Make sure you are giving positive attention to the easily frustrated child, praising things he does that you like. Don't wait until he hurts the other child to offer one-on-one time with you. And don't gush over the injured child excessively, lest he take on the role of martyr and cause even more conflict in the long run.

3. Be consistent with consequences

When a biting incident happens, you need to be prepared with a response that is predictable and rational. Erin McKelvie of Cary NC had a problem with her daughter Emily frequently biting her twin brother Eric. "The biting began soon after they turned 1 and lasted for many anguished months," she says. "Battles over toys or books were usually the trigger. I tried time-outs and they struck out. Eventually I followed our pediatrician's advice. I sympathize with the victim and remove him from the room, thereby isolating the aggressor. When Emily bit her brother, I firmly told her Eric and I could not play with

her when she was biting." What to Expect in the Toddler Years offers similar advice: "Focus your immediate attention on rescuing the victim rather than admonishing the perpetrator." Once the victim has been reassured, turn your attention to the biter. "Calmly, and without anger, explain briefly that the behavior is unacceptable, and why." McKelvie's advice to parents of a biter is similar. "Tell the aggressor that it's okay to be angry but try to use words, like that perennial toddler favorite- NO!- before baring teeth to resolve the argument."

4. Just remain calm

If you have ever caught yourself throwing a book across the room in anger or slamming a plate down on the table- and who hasn't- you understand frustration. You also know that is not the way to encourage rational behavior in children, so try to apologize soon afterward and explain that you were frustrated and your behavior was inappropriate. In the same way, when your child bites, an angry or violent response from you does not get across the message that aggressive acting out is wrong, it could backfire by encouraging more of the same. McKelvie received some misguided advice of that type. "Just bite her, urged her own

mother. 'Shove a bar of soap in her mouth,' advised a friend. I dismissed both ideas as too violent or too radical. What kind of role model would I be if I bit or tortured my child?" Dr. Benjamin Spock agrees, writing in *Baby and Child Care* "Parents can control their children better by staying in charge as a friendly boss than by descending to her age level to battle with bites, slaps, or shouts."

With patience and words, not anger, Lisa Edwards of Fargo ND was able to solve biting by her identical twins, Tyler and Chad, now 4 years old. "I tried everything in the book from spanking, which didn't work, to time-outs, which only worked sometimes. They always seemed to bite one another when they fought over a toy, which was pretty often. It used to drive me nuts! I would always tell them that biting hurts, and then I would make them hug and comfort each other, and I would take away whatever they were fighting over. To this day, when one sees he has hurt his twin or they realize they have hurt each other, they comfort and hug one another without my encouraging them to do it. It makes me so proud that at such a young age they have learned how to be concerned and how to show affection toward each other."

5. Remember that time heals all wounds

Eventually, Kirsh's 2-year-old Rina got over her urge to bite her twin Jason. Her dad Stuart explains, "Stern rebukes and the occasional three-second time-out helped some, but she just seemed to outgrow the phase, as Jason did with his bullying." McKelvie had the same experience. "We finally licked our biting problem with the only surefire method: time. Emily simply grew out of it. Most importantly, she gained language and could express her anger more effectively. I knew she had been biting out of frustration. Emily and Eric are 2 ½ now and I am happy to say the biting episodes are over, hopefully forever."

Keep talking to your children, help them learn to talk about their feelings and take a few deep breaths. Eventually, like so many other stages, this too shall pass. Before you know it your twins will be running to you with a long list of complaints about the other's behavior- but at least they'll be using their mouths in a more constructive way. ❤️



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by Alice M. Vollmar



Same Peace & Quiet

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

These two words mean different things to different people. But to parents of active, talkative and often physically demanding young multiples, their important, stress-saving roles are decidedly precious. Just how much do these treasured commodities cost? Here are several mothers' strategies for 'buying' a little of both on a daily basis.

WHISPER/SOFT VOICE

When she wants her twins to behave more peacefully, Elaine Kumpula, mother of 4-year-old identical twin boys, James and Michael, lowers her voice to a whisper. Then, she says her twins lower their voices, too. Saying 'soft voice' while rubbing

each of her children's cheeks with her index finger is a successful calming technique that Nancy Beck-Erdman uses when the behavior of her 2-year-old fraternal twins, Henry and Emma are out of control. (Now, if one twin wants his co-twin to be quieter he says 'soft voice'.) Beck-Erdman also asks her twins to differentiate between their 'inside and outside' voices.

MARSHMALLOW FEET AND 'ZIPPERED MOUTH'

When your twins plus playmates sound like a thundering herd, ask them to walk with 'marshmallow' feet, suggests Beck-Erdman. "Kids catch on to that right away." The marshmallow



concept works for voice volume, too. Ask you twins to pretend that they each have a marshmallow in their mouth, suggests Barb Oxley, mother of 4-year-old fraternal twins, Julie and Jeff and 16-year-old, Josie. The old trick of admonishing children to 'zip your mouth shut' has also been a pretend activity that she says brought quiet to her family chaos! Another trick is to have your twins pretend they have a bubble in their mouth when walking through places they really need to be quiet.

MUSIC EQUALS MELLOW

"Music has charms to soothe a savage beast," wrote William Congreve. I agree! Play songs softly on a piano or listen to your favorite MP3 or movie soundtrack your twins love in order to create a calmer climate for everyone. Favorite movie tunes kept Kumpula's twins absorbed during long car trips, she says. Sing-along nursery songs with finger games or bringing along their favorite DVD makes great entertainment in the car. Music also comes in handy during that half hour or so before dinner or at bedtime when the natives may be feeling restless. To create opportunities for peace and quiet, bring special toys and games with you for your children during 'waiting' times like doctor visits, airplane trips and in the car. One mom fills a backpack with toys and snack foods that are easy to eat and on the low end of the messy scale, or a few supplies for fun activities—like crayons and paper, playing cards and books.

SPONTANEOUS DIVERSION

Think of ways to be inventive. Play animal identification and alphabet games in the car, bus or train. Talk about what you see around you. Count anything. How many red objects do you see in this room? In an elevator, ask your twins to figure out how many floors there are; with their eyes closed, ask them to guess the floor at each stop.

GIVE THEM ATTENTION BEFORE THEY SCREAM

Karla Hovald's philosophy is to give her three children (3-year-old twin boys,

Wyatt and Kyle, and Weston, 17-months) attention before their behavior gets out of control. "If they are starting to be 'extra' noisy, it's usually because they aren't getting my attention. So, I stop what I'm doing and positively given them attention. Often, all they need is a drink of water or something to eat," she explains. Individual attention at bedtime—each parent lying down briefly with each twin and talking quietly about the day's activities helps the Kumpula twins quiet down for the night.

TEACHING TELEPHONE MANNERS

Talking on the phone is a notorious time for all chaos to break out with your children. Therefore, a plan of action during adult telephone time was a popular choice for these busy moms of multiples. They suggested pre-arranging a silent signal, such as a touch on the arm to which they nod. Then, as soon as there's a break in the phone conversation, ask what their children need. This also worked for times when they had company over or a repair person that needed their attention when the twins also thought they needed attention from mom, too! To cut down on interruptions, Oxley told her young twins that she was available to listen to them or play a game when she hung up the phone—and followed through.

SAY WHAT YOU'LL DO AND DO WHAT YOU SAY

Let your twins know in advance what is expected of them, such as getting along in the car, sitting in their car seats and advise them of the consequences. If you say that a consequence of their bickering is that you'll turn the car around and go home, and bickering continues, go home. Your twins will learn quickly that you mean what you say. Of course, none of these strategies are fool-proof. But imaginative approaches are more effective than telling twins over and over... "Please be quiet!" ♥

Think you're alone?



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LET'S CELEBRATE

Birthday Ideas for Parents with Twins & Multiples

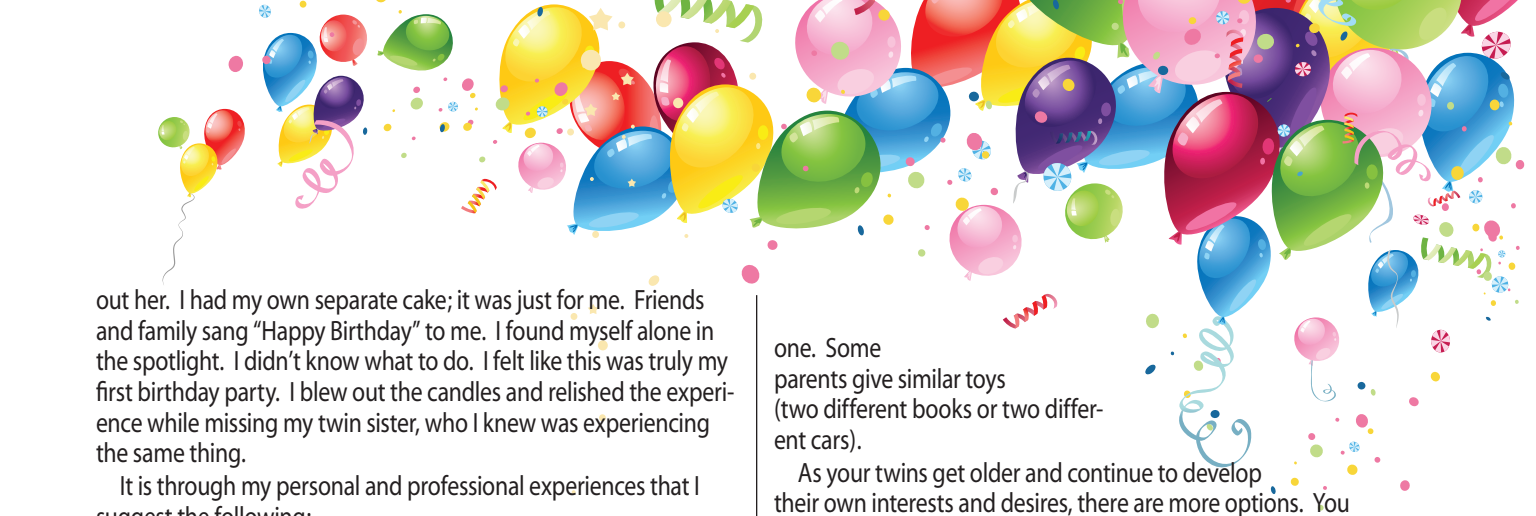


All children's birthdays are special, and for twins, they are doubly special. Parents of twins have so many questions regarding this special day and rightfully so, they are more complex than a singleton birthday. These celebrations are an important opportunity to show your multiples they are loved as separate unique individuals who also share a unique bond. Parents confirm this in both their words and actions.

As a monozygotic twin and a psychotherapist who works with multiples and their families, I would like to share some of

my personal experiences around birthday celebrations. When I was young, my twin, Elaine, and I would always share a birthday. It never occurred to either one of us there was another way to celebrate a twin birthday. My parents bought one cake for Elaine and me and then sang "Happy Birthday" to both of us at the same time. When we had a "Sweet Sixteen" party, again there was one party and one cake and our friends sang one song to both of us.

After Elaine and I married our respective spouses, Elaine moved to another state. It was then I experienced my first birthday with-



out her. I had my own separate cake; it was just for me. Friends and family sang "Happy Birthday" to me. I found myself alone in the spotlight. I didn't know what to do. I felt like this was truly my first birthday party. I blew out the candles and relished the experience while missing my twin sister, who I knew was experiencing the same thing.

It is through my personal and professional experiences that I suggest the following:

Should twins share or have a separate birthday celebration?

This depends on the age of the twins. For very young twins, just having a party; that is what is exciting to them. They may not be aware of their separateness. Sharing a party would make it easier on parents, who are tired from the first years of child caring. Also young twins are happy and content with their co-twin and a small select number of friends.

For older children, this can be an important time to discuss with them their separateness and uniqueness. They may have similar or different interests, desires and/or friends. Let them have a say in their birthday celebration. Tell them there is no right or wrong way and what they want one year may or may not be what they will choose the next year; it can be a year by year decision. You may also want to talk to them about what is feasible and the advantages and disadvantages to each scenario.

How do we celebrate?

As multiples get older and develop their own identities, likes and dislikes, they may want to celebrate their birthdays in different ways. Ask them what they would like. One may want a "Princess" party; the other, "Sponge Bob." If twins have separate parties, this does not present a problem. For those twins who choose to share a party, it will take more planning. I have seen many houses decorated in two themes. It is amazing how creative you can be and the décor will definitely be "one of a kind."

Should we have one cake or two?

You probably know my answer by now. It is so important every child feel he is special, unique and valued in his own way. For twins the need is even greater. Each twin needs to be acknowledged and have their own cake, whether they are simple cupcakes or more elaborate themed cakes.

Also, be sure to sing "Happy Birthday" to each one individually. No matter if the cakes are brought out together or separate. Keep track of who was sung to first and switch the next year.

What about presents? Should we give them the same gift?

One of the most special gifts every child loves, especially twins, is to share some "alone time" with each parent, grandparent, or friend. This is a gift that both of your twins will cherish. It will be greatly appreciated, even if it is just a trip to the ice cream parlor.

When giving presents, it is most important that each child receive their own individually wrapped gift. If a large gift is given to be shared, an additional small toy can be purchase for each. For the very young child, there is no perfect answer whether to give the same or different toy. It would be difficult to know what toy each one would like and/or if they would each like the same

one. Some parents give similar toys (two different books or two different cars).

As your twins get older and continue to develop their own interests and desires, there are more options. You can ask each twin to make a wish list and pass this on to others. There are times when they will receive a present they don't like. Or they may want the one their co-twin received. Again, this is a valuable time to have a discussion about being separate individuals. I suggest you talk with them about their feelings and share the heartfelt reality that they will not always be the same in everything they get or do. Inform them it usually balances out in the long run.

Celebrations are wonderful opportunities to show your twins how separate and unique they truly are and how much they are individually loved. These discussions and celebrations prepare them for life's lessons. ♥

Eileen M. Pearlman, Ph.D. is the Director of TwInsight headquartered in Santa Monica, California (www.TwInsight.com.) She is a twin herself and is married to a twin. She is the co-author of *Raising Twins From Birth Through Adolescents: What Parents Want to Know (and What Twins Want to Tell Them)* published by HarperCollins.

Twin Research Study:

Do you have identical or fraternal same-sex twins as well as same sex non-twin siblings (*not more than 4-years-old or younger than each other*) to take part in a twin research study conducted by Patrice Brennan, as part of her BA degree in Psychology at Dublin City University.

She is conducting a study examining whether there are significant differences between twin siblings and non-twin siblings with regard to aspects of their sibling relationship.

Anyone fitting this criteria and wanting to help in this research study please click on the link below to take this survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LSCN5G2>



Throwing Twin Birthday Parties and Tips to Consider

By Steven Jeffries

As I write this, my wife Lisa and I are planning our soon to be six year old twins' birthday party or parties. Up until now, Josh and Abby have had their parties together, but being a boy and a girl, their interests are becoming more different and so have their choice in parties. This is not to say that they do not wish to have a party together, but they have each suggested an entirely different idea for their "perfect" sixth birthday party.

These days any child's birthday is a big deal and offers many choices. When I was a kid most birthday parties were held at home. Kids would eat and play games. Other options were bowl-

gether. The older the children get, the more difficult it is. There are a few options available to parents of twins: separate parties; one party shared; a family-only party or get together; or a special celebration that is not a party; or even a combination of these. Our family has tried or at least considered all of these, and each choice was made based on that year's particular circumstances. Things to consider are the twins' age, whether they are in the same or different classes, their daycare and outside school situations, the kids' similar or differing interests, and the affordability of each option. We found that as these change, so does the inclination towards a particular choice.

OUR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS STORY

Here is our family's birthday party chronology. Each birthday brought different questions and solutions and our situations may very well parallel your own. When our twins were one years old, we wanted to make a big deal of it. At this point my wife had been home for the entire year on maternity leave (as is common in Canada) and so the kids were not in day care as of yet. We wanted this celebration to be just our immediate family but didn't feel our house could accommodate the number of guests adequately, including three older nieces. So we chose to do the party at a play centre which had activities for our twelve month olds, but also for the older girls. Everyone ate pizza and cake (we ordered one for each child and sang happy birthday twice which has become a family tradition) and then our son and daughter opened their gifts. It was a special celebration, but we didn't feel the need to invite all our friends and their kids to it. We had been invited to a few of these one-year old parties prior to our own children being born.

By the time Josh and Abby were two years old, they were in a full time day care. We didn't really want to spend a lot of money on a birthday party for their friends, especially if no one else was doing the same and inviting



ing parties, or at McDonalds or Ponderosa Steak House. But now there are so many choices for children's birthday parties from restaurants to play centres to specialized programs to sports parties that it would take another article to go through them all. This is only complicated with twins, particularly if they are a boy and girl and /or have different interests.

Now, one might argue that one of the few possible economic benefits for parents of multiples is combined birthday parties, but getting the kids to have the same party, and agree on who should come, or how the kids should be chosen, is another thing alto-



them. They were actually only invited to two parties prior to their birthday, and one was not a day care child. The parties were not only on the same day, but at the same adventure playground venue, one in the morning and the other later that afternoon! Both our kids were invited to each of the parties. By this time, we had already decided against a large kids party, and were glad we did after attending these two. In the end, it was a quiet affair with only the grandparents at our home, enjoying some cake.

When our twins were turning three, they were well entrenched in the day care with lots of friends, and had already attended several parties. However, there were two classes in the day care and a few of their friends had moved up to the "senior room". We felt we could not exclude many kids from their own class, and had a few more to invite from the other room, outside friends, and family. This led to a guest list of over 25 potential children along with their parents. One of the things that must be considered in the years up to four or five years old, are that most parties must include the parents and that usually means feeding them too, which adds to the cost. You also have to make sure your venue can accommodate the number you intend to invite.

There are so many choices, but they all have different maximums. We found a play centre that could accommodate our numbers and took care of most of the work. Cakes for twins can become an issue at these parties and at this one the cake size was so large that we had only two realistic options. They offered to cut the cake in half or to design one half of the cake for Abby and the other half for Josh with their choice of characters in the icing. We chose the second choice and the kids were both very happy. The party was very successful but also expensive.

When they turned four, they were in a new day care centre, with a new group of kids, but we also were going to Disney World as a family and planned to celebrate their birthdays there. The trip was not their present from us, but we felt that celebrating with my wife's parents at Chef Mickey's was a pretty good celebration—and it most certainly was! We did consider a couple of simpler and cheaper party ideas with just their closest friends. But, in the end, we chose a family breakfast celebration at a local restaurant.

At five, we faced a new dilemma. Josh and Abby were now in kindergarten for half the day and in the senior room in daycare for the rest of the day. So now they had friends from their junior kindergarten class, the daycare, and crossovers, along with those outside these. This meant a large guest list, even with the decision to not invite everyone from both classrooms. Lisa found a great

cooking class birthday party where the kids make pizza to eat, decorate cupcakes to take home, colour chef hats, and eat cake. Most parents drop off their child and it takes care of the meal and the "loot bag" for you. It was reasonably priced and had a limit of about thirty children. There were about five or six kids we invited from outside the day-care and school, and then Abby and Josh took turns selecting ten friends to invite. This cooking party was very successful and another set of twins, our family friends, did the same party, and the boy and girl were in separate kindergarten classes at the time. This still allowed them to have all their friends together. Of course, it goes without saying that one birthday party is much easier to manage than two.

THEIR UPCOMING BIRTHDAY

So we had been considering letting each of them have their own 6th birthday party. This, of course, would mean finding two separate dates, and sometimes finding one good one with all their activities along with both Easter and Passover falling on or near their birthday, is hard enough! There would be the challenge of organizing two separate parties, and keeping track of the invitations, food, cakes, and loot bags for each one. And in our current situation, there are several kids that overlap as friends of both our children, especially with Josh and Abby being in the same kindergarten and daycare classes. It is easier to invite them all to one party, rather than ask a few children to come to two, or have to decide which of the two kids should invite a particular child.

There would be the extra financial cost of doing two parties, and parents of twins and multiples are always looking to avoid this with good reason. Now it is true to say that two different aged siblings would probably have separate parties, but they would also likely be spread out, and not within a week or so of each other. In the end, my wife found a party idea that both Abby and Josh could agree on, at a trampoline centre, and this is what we are planning to do. So we have dodged the double birthday parties for at least one more year! ♥

Steven Jeffries is an elementary teacher, husband to family photographer Lisa, and father to five year old twins. He resides near Toronto, Canada. You can read his blog at <http://atwinsdad.blogspot.ca>



Birthday Banner

Its birthday time! To help celebrate your multiple's birthdays, display this cheerful banner. It's very easy to make. For this project, you will need the following items:

- 27 x 36 inch piece of white denim
- Colored ribbon
- Pre-gathered, finished ruffle
- Brown, tan and black felt squares
- Blue, red yellow or green fabric
- Buttons, beads, wiggle eyes

The banner grows with your children as you place a heart balloon for every year they celebrate their "beary" special day! ♡

Julie Hoffman of Aurora, Colorado is a fraternal twin. She has one daughter and 14 year old twin boys.



1. For the banner, cut a 36 x 24 inch piece of denim. Cut a 4 x 32 inch hanger trip. Then pin it at the top on the back of the banner. Leave an inch of space on both ends.



2. Round the corners and pin the ruffle on the outside edges, sandwiching banner inside ruffle. At the top, pin both the banner and the hanger pieces together inside the ruffle.



3. Sew the ruffle to the banner. Where ruffle ends meet, fold ruffle back at an angle. Sew beginning ruffle to a point. For the hanger, press under an inch hem. Stitch it to the banner.



4. Cut felt into teddy bear shapes and numbers. Using the colored material, cut out your children's names, the word "day" and two sets of heart shaped balloons.



5. Following manufacture's directions, apply iron adhesive to pieces. Then iron on each item. Every year, attach another balloon that corresponds with the children's age.



6. Cut ribbon strips and glue them between the bears' hands and to the heart shaped balloons. Then glue eyes, bows, buttons and beads onto the bears.

The Red Dress

by Jacqueline Davidson Kopito
and Amy Davidson Lombardo

Turning sixteen was very exciting for my twinnie, Amy and I and having a Sweet Sixteen Party was even more exciting. Our parents spent weeks preparing for the celebration. They had to first find the right place, the DJ, the caterer, etc. Amy and I were busy making decisions on who to invite and who not to invite, who should sit with who and what songs should be played. Finally, all the plans were made and the lists were finalized. We couldn't wait to celebrate!

Now, all that we needed to do was to find the perfect dresses. My Mom, Amy, and I began our mission on a bright and sunny Saturday morning two weeks before the big day. We excitedly headed to New York City where Mom took us to all the large department stores. The first stop was Saks Fifth Avenue in midtown. We started searching the racks. Amy quickly picked out four beautiful dresses (some of which I hated) but I only found one. Before I knew it, Amy was modeling the first dress she had found. It was a deep shade of red, fitted and sleeveless and had a satin red ribbon that wound around her waist. She spun around a few times so we could admire the full view as we all nodded our heads saying "perfect!" In the meantime, I'm thinking "ten minutes, she's done, now what about me?" The one dress I found paled in comparison to Amy's and I decided not to bother trying it on.

We spent the rest of the day searching for my dress. We covered Bloomingdales, Lord & Taylor and Macy's, but no luck. I wasn't even being picky, but for whatever reason none of the dresses looked good on me. Then we headed south to Greenwich Village and poked around in the cutest places we could find. Still no luck! I felt horrible. Our big birthday celebration was in two weeks and I still had nothing to wear. I was starting to lose hope.

As we were driving home, exhausted, my Mom suggested we make a quick stop at the little boutique in our town. I couldn't even think about looking at another dress, let alone trying one on-I must have pulled at least thirty dresses on and off throughout the day- but Mom insisted. I dragged myself into the boutique and began looking for a dress. We recruited a friendly saleswoman to help us and minutes later, she whisked me into the dressing room to show me what she thought were five beautiful dresses.

At last, I started to think that there was some hope and just maybe, I would find a dress after all. Amy had her fingers crossed.

The first three dresses were disasters, and I started praying that the fourth dress would look good on me. I slipped it on and my first thought was not bad-it was surprisingly nice, really nice! My heart started to race, as I knew "this was the dress." Finally! I came out of the dressing room beaming, happy to show everyone my dress. Everyone said how wonderful I looked and that the dress was made for me, everyone except Amy. She was staring at me, and I could tell from the look on her face that she was upset as she blurted out "It's RED, like mine!"

Amy thought it was a bad idea for both of us to wear red, as much as she wanted me to look great at our party. She was afraid that the guests who had not seen us in a while, and who were likely to mix us up anyway, would just be even more confused. I was holding back my tears, thinking do I wear the red dress that upsets Amy or do I find the strength to keep looking? What if I never found another dress? I was beginning to think I should just wear my new nightgown. Why was Amy making such a fuss?!

All of a sudden, the UPS guy walks in carrying a large box. Another salesperson, unaware of my dilemma, signed for the box and started to open it. "Oh look," she said nonchalantly to my salesperson, "we just got that same red dress in blue and lavender. Do you think the young lady would like to take a look at them?" Without missing a beat, I screamed "I'll take the blue one!"

Final Twinny Thought: Getting ready for a party is half the fun! ♥

Be prepared for the Placement of your Multiples in School



THE PLACEMENT ISSUE

Parents are increasingly concerned about the placement of their multiple-birth children in school. Interestingly, many states have passed laws regarding school placement, and many other states are considering such laws. The laws are a formal way of enforcing sound professional policy. In other words, there would be no need for such laws if school administrators and education professionals would consider the needs of each set of twins or multiples and their educational needs before making a placement decision. This is typically the procedure for other students in certain circumstances, and is routinely done for students with individual social, behavioral,

or disability issues. Why then, should it be any different for students who happen to have a same age brother or sister?

IS EACH CHILD UNIQUE?

Education professionals know that each child, each student, is unique in their educational development and their learning needs. We realize that one approach or one strategy will not adequately address the needs of everyone in our class. Therefore the most effective teachers vary their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of their students. It furthermore stands that a rigid policy will not adequately address the needs of all twins / multiples.

How do I know if my children should be in the separate or in the same classroom?

Some Possible Reasons to separate:

- Very different learning needs
- Very different developmental or cognitive abilities
- Siblings are often more confrontational when together
- Siblings often do not socialize with peers
- One sibling overshadows other sibling(s)

Some Possible Reasons to keep together:

- Siblings adapt well to different environmental or social situations
- Siblings make / have their own friends
- Siblings work well whether they are together or apart
- Siblings have similar cognitive ability
- Siblings express an appreciation for each other and are motivated by each other's presence

Anyone studying twins and multiples realizes this as well: each set of siblings is unique as a set. Therefore, one policy or placement strategy will not “fit” each set of siblings. Some siblings do very well to work and learn in the same room or within easy sight of each other. Some siblings benefit from time away from their sibling(s) as a way of discovering talents or making new friends. And for some siblings, the placement arrangement will not matter. The point here is: It doesn’t make sense to have a policy that doesn’t address the needs of all twins / multiples.

The only policy should be a flexible policy. A flexible policy realizes the need for different approaches and different placement arrangements. It also places importance on evidence (or data) to make decisions that are most likely to be in the best interest of the children. A flexible policy should include a review and revisit process in the case where a placement decision appears to be counterproductive to the needs and development of the children. Flexibility is needed in our willingness to change placements if the educational needs of the students are not being effectively met. Again, true professionalism requires us to revisit and reverse previous decisions when necessary. ♥

How do I work with my school to ensure the best possible support for my children?

Teachers, administrators, and school personnel don’t always have access or knowledge of the current research on twins and multiples. The surest way to support your children and their educational needs is to do your research. Sites such as Curtin University’s www.twinsandmultiples.org web site and the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (NOMOTC) website: www.nomotc.org can be invaluable. For many educators, it may be the first time they realized such resources exist. Providing print resources is also recommended. I suggest leaving booklets or books such as NOMOTC’s *Placement of Multiple Birth Children in School* or my own *Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn* at your child’s school. Then, schedule a time to discuss these materials with your teacher or principal. I find having the materials readily available is often preferable to simply referring someone to a web resource.

Discuss the www.twinsandmultiples.org web resources with your teacher and principal. Print out some of the helpful guides from that site and ask your school to consider discussing that resource at one of their professional in-service events.

Find out if there are other parents of multiples in your school or in your district. Discuss their experiences and take a proactive approach to planning. Emphasize the positive interest of your advocacy. I have found both as a teacher and as a professor, that it’s easier to have school officials consider your point of view when you express a positive willingness to seek what is best for everyone. Counter negative comments with information and evidence to support the needs of your children.

As a classroom teacher, I always appreciated ideas from parents who were operating from an attitude of genuine inquiry and support. Approaching a teacher or administrator in such a manner can facilitate an open communication. Such openness can in turn, benefit both sides.

Not all twins react or struggle with the same issues. As the chart demonstrates, some types of twin sibling combinations adapt more easily to the school setting. Therefore, it is necessary and prudent

Some Learning Differences among Twin Siblings

Male DZ and MZ brothers frequently:

- find competition beneficial & motivational
- enjoy 1:1 competition with sibling
- usually don’t share study time / study together
- deal openly with issues of identity and competition
- deal openly and quickly with emotions

Female DZ and MZ sisters frequently:

- find competition with twin distracting / threatening
- enjoys competing as a team with sister twin against others
- usually do share study time / study together
- deal privately with issues of identity and competition
- deal reflectively and slowly with emotions

Male – Female Fraternal Siblings frequently:

- have an easy time negotiating than other siblings

to consider the needs of each set of siblings on the merits of their unique relationship. Making important educational decisions with their unique needs in mind will ease the transition to school.

How to determine if my twins are struggling with issues of school placement, competition, or identity?

There are numerous ways a parent or teacher may detect whether a child is struggling or bothered by adjustment issues at school. The most obvious sign is when either or both children suddenly dislike attending school. This can also occur if one is ill and must remain at home for several days while the other must attend school alone. Such a change in attitude toward school should be evaluated in terms of its frequency, severity, and duration. The book, *Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn*, contains some survey questions and checklists that may help parents and teachers evaluate some common struggles such as: competition, individual recognition, and identity.

Another indicator of possible placement or competition struggles surface when one sibling shows disdain or resentment for the other. If such behavior is sudden or occurs over several days or weeks, it may be a signal of an issue that is begging for attention from the teacher and parents. Again, such occurrences should be evaluated in terms of how frequently (number of expressions per day) the twin expresses such behaviors, how pronounced the expressed behaviors are, and over what length of time (days or weeks) the expression of behavior occurs.

When dealing with young students, we should allow them to express their thoughts and feelings in various ways beyond direct questions. Permitting a child to draw a picture of how they feel about a particular incident or arrangement can be extremely informative. Role playing a contrived (or actual) situation is another good way children can express their thoughts and emotions. Using puppets and make-believe characters is yet another way to permit children to openly express their ideas. ♥

invented, they were wrapped in blankets and put in the door of a stove to keep warm.

The twins lived apart for many years when Eisgrou moved to Florida in 1949, and Primack followed her in 1971. They each enjoyed the majority of their lives, outlived their husbands, and had one son each. They're both astonished by their record-breaking age. "I can't believe it, that I've reached that age. The good thing is our minds are sharp. That's the only good thing," Eisgrou only started driving at the age of 78 and didn't stop until four years ago, when her now 71-year-old son told her she shouldn't get a new car with all the hijackings!" Amazingly, the twins continue to live almost completely independently and both use a cane to walk, but are healthy and independent. Primack even survived ovarian cancer years ago. They credit their longevity with having a sense of humor and remember often switching husbands when they visited each other just to be funny! Although the sisters have always been close and share an amazing twin-bond, they just can't agree on what has led them to live such a long life.

Twins separated after birth reunite after 65 years

Can you imagine not even knowing you had a sibling or even a twin and finding out after decades of living your life? That is exactly what happened to fraternal twins Etta Stevens and Sandi Ikenn when they recently discovered they were not only related but were twins! The two women were both adopted shortly after birth and they both didn't even know that the other one existed until Stevens began to search for information about her biological family.

"Neither of us knew we were twins. I wanted to find out about my birth parents because of medicinal reasons," Stevens said. What she thought would be an uneventful peek into her past snowballed into a chain of events that led to meeting her co-twin. An incredible 65 years go by and the twin sisters finally reunited and discovered that they share many things in common. They were both adopted on the same exact day and they both have three children, and both enjoy oatmeal in the morning. What's even crazier is that they grew up in the same neighborhood in Chicago only 15 minutes apart and never even knew! Stevens and her husband, Larry, were the radio personalities Mr. and Mrs. FM in Chicago before moving to South Florida. "What's strange is that I always felt like something was missing but now my circle is complete after all of these years!" The two recently met in Chicago and got to know each other and during a visit to Stevens' meditation class, Roz Reich, a meditation teacher, presented the twins with several gifts, including their tiaras, and said their story serves as a reminder that miracles can come true. Reich also added, "We know that there are no coincidences in life."



Etta Stevens, left, enjoys time with Sandi Ikenn, her fraternal twin sister

It is also important to assess whether only one or both of the siblings are expressing similar emotions. Sometimes only one will be struggling with a situation or placement, while the other is perfectly content. In such cases, the affected child may for a time need more attention. However, the thoughts and emotions of both siblings (and their non-twin siblings) need to be considered.

Again, no firm rule or standard of advice can be applied successfully to all sets of twins / siblings. Each set is unique and each set is bound to navigate experiences according to their individual and collective talents. Therefore, avoid generalizations when possible and consider the specific issues (or complaints) of the children and deal directly with those issues.

Additional suggestions may be found in Dr. Mascazine's book: *Understanding Multiple-Birth Children and How They Learn*, which should be available from your local library or twins and multiples support group. For additional information, contact: twineducation@yahoo.com. . ♥

John R. Mascazine, Ph.D. resides and teaches in Columbus, Ohio. He currently teaches in the Education Division at Ohio Dominican University specializing in educational psychology and preparing early, middle, and secondary school science teachers. He's been researching and interviewing twins and multiples since 1994. Dr. Mascazine has presented at various local, national, and international conferences including the International Society of Twin Studies Congresses and the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs Convention. His specialty is understanding the learning strategies and needs of multiples as students.

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ARE THINGS GETTING TOO HECTIC IN YOUR LIFE?

Define your focus

by Joann M. Amoroso



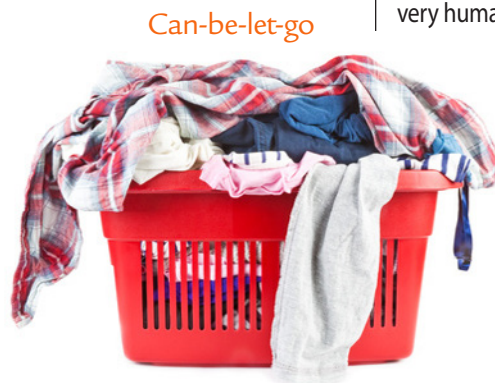
Have-to-be

When I was growing up, my mother had three baskets of ironing. She called them her “have-to-be,” “should-be” and “can-be-let-go” baskets. She would try very hard to make sure the clothes in the “have-to-be” basket made it back to the closet during the week. We occasionally wore a “should-be,” but normally just on special occasions. She was busy raising three little children and staying active in her community. Needless to say, I never saw the “can-be-let-go” pile go anywhere but to Goodwill. She even managed to turn the tasks that she could not complete into good deeds.

THINGS “TO DO”

Last weekend I had a “to do” list that really seemed endless, there were the typical weekly activities like grocery shopping and laundry, but I had also let a number of things slide that were beginning to pile up. We had missed three friends’ and one nephew’s birthdays. When I say miss, I mean like a bowling ball in the gutter of the third lane over from where you were aiming. Weeks were turning into months and if we were going to remember these birthdays for this year we had to do something. Then we needed to get the kids outfits for the visit to the photographer that was scheduled first thing next weekend. I had scoured the closet and had come up short. Nothing fit, literally or figuratively, for the special picture.

Then there was the grass in the front yard. It had exquisite shades of brown in various patches that looked like a modern art piece gone bad—very bad. It was in desperate need of attention. We needed to balance the checkbook—or at least see if it was anywhere near level. There was also the matter of five sets of pictures to



Can-be-let-go

be put into the album, an emissions test due for the car and that promise I made about getting the last of the “baby safety” items for the living room. We also wanted to call Jack’s mother to see how she was doing. The list terrified us, because we knew that several things were not even written down.

THIS WAY AND THAT

The kids were up at 6:30 a.m. and ready to play. Then we had breakfast and went to story time at the library. When they went down for naps, my husband and I went back over the list. Jack took off for the lawn and garden shop while I did some quick catalog shopping. The birthdays were done in three phone calls. The stack of catalogs drives Jack crazy, but it sure came in hand that day. When Jack got back I left for the mall and the grocery store. I stopped on the way for an emissions test. I always like to take tests that I know I can pass. The car did not let me down.



Should-be

Three outfits, one sack of baby “safety items” and eight bags of groceries later I returned to find Jack and the kids playing before lunch. As we put away groceries, we called my mother-in-law and went on to lunch. I use to think I was a master of multi-tasking. Now I know that I did not even know what that meant.

FOCUSING ON PRIORITIES

The checkbook and the pictures sat on the desk all weekend and were still there when I last checked. We went to the park instead.

I think about my mother a lot as I am raising my three little children. Looking back, I marvel at what she did in her life and how she did it. She was not a saint nor was she perfect. She was very human, loving and wise. I came to realize that it was not just ironing that she had in those baskets. She put everything she wanted to accomplish into three neat piles. She was the master at prioritizing, though she never would have described herself that way.

She made sure her family came first, then her friends, then her community. She never lost sight of what was important. When I think about what I want in my “have-to-be” basket, almost all the wrinkles in life easily slip into the pile labeled “can-be-let-go.” ♥

Joann Amoroso of Englewood, Colorado, is an operations manager and the mother of triplets.

On Twins & Kitchen Safety

by Shane Borrowman

Elizabeth and I have twins who began walking well before their first birthday—and immediately walked into trouble, particularly in the kitchen. Because I cook the majority of our meals and my wife bakes frequently, the kitchen is a hub of activity. John and Samantha want to be near us, and being near us in the kitchen puts them in harm's way. We took all the usual precautions covered in baby-safety articles: a latch on the oven door, clips that hold drawers and cupboards closed, covers on the electrical outlets. It wasn't enough. The accident happened when my wife was baking cookies.

Our son, who'd only learned to walk days before, saw the open oven door and rushed it. Before we could react, his tiny hand slapped flat onto the pre-heated surface. He began to scream and to howl. I don't panic easily. I panic spectacularly.

Gathering John up in my arms, I ran for the bathroom, enacting a half-formed plan to get his hand under cold running water. Logically, it would have been both easier and quicker to use the kitchen sink, and not running headlong through the house might have kept him from panicking, too. It certainly would have added less drama to this unfolding trauma. Ah, hindsight. Instead of reacting logically, I grabbed, ran, and generally made a bad situation terrible. Worse, I have no memory of where Sam (John's twin sister) was during any of this. I'd been lying on the living room floor, lifting her above me and tickling her belly, when John screamed in pain. I guess I set her down, ran to the kitchen, etc. I guess. Presumably,

she sat on the floor where I'd left her, not crying and not panicking while me (and my wife) did both.

Urgent Care dealt with the burn, while Tylenol handled the lingering pain. I dealt with the guilt, shame, and horror of what had happened by turning John's hand into a bandage-wrapped club—as if extra layers of dressing could undo his first trauma (our first as parents). Before I could trust the kitchen again, changes had to be made. None of them major. All of them significant.

Scribble on This

During graduate school I once rented an apartment where the bathroom walls had been covered by not wallpaper but contact paper—it was a gray granite sort of pattern. This paper had been applied over the original plaster—lumpy and crumbling—leaving the walls with a through-the-looking-glass sort of unevenness. Since living in this apartment, I have carried an irrational dislike of contact paper—a dislike now erased by its usefulness in my kitchen. Specifically, after John's injury, I looked for ways to keep small hands busy and safe while keeping them close to me. I found contact paper that doubles as a chalkboard. At the end of my kitchen cupboards and on the far side of the island, I pasted two sheets of this rough black paper. I bought sidewalk chalk—its size perfect for toddler hands and also slightly less likely to snap under pressure—and kept it in a tiny bucket in the nearest cupboard (see below). For less than \$10.00, I kept John and Sam occupied at a safe distance from the



stove. We're still working on coloring only on the paper and not on the walls, floor, dog, or each other.

No Latches Here

No toddler can remain focused upon a single activity for long, and twins are no exception to this rule. The contact paper chalkboard worked as a place to start, but writing on a chalkboard is a single activity that grows stale in isolation. To keep things less monotonous, I emptied out the nearest cupboard—the furthest from the stove—and loaded it with toys. Noisy toys. The cupboard acts as a safe place to store the chalk, but, like a simple cardboard box; its own lure is irresistible. So it's a safe place to store the twins, too. When not coloring with chalk or playing with those noisy toys—the bells and whistles help me keep track of the kids' location even with my back turned—John and Sam often crawl into the cupboard and close the door behind them. The door cracks open occasionally as I cook or wash dishes, mostly to emit a burst of dad-can't-find-us giggles. There's not much storage in my kitchen, and the loss of a cupboard is hard to bear. But there are worse things to lose than cupboard space.

Don't Cross that Line

When I work around the home, I always buy more supplies than I need, assuming on some level that the extra material will come in handy later. As John and Sam colored on their chalkboard and played in their cupboard, I looked for a clear, visual cue to tell them where not to be while I cook. I needed a safety zone around the stove and between the stove and sink—the high-traffic cooking space. The kitchen floor is a virtually unbroken, seamless expanse of linoleum, and the layout provides no obvious spatial divisions. Chalk lines rub off too easily, while inked lines don't rub off easily enough; colored masking tape leaves glue splotches that must be peeled up. But the blue tape that remained from my last painting project solved this dilemma nicely. As John and Sam watched, I stretched tape across the kitchen, “walling” off the most dangerous spaces and visibly separating them from the safe play region. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, I explained the Blue Line to them, repeatedly talking about cooking and kitchen safety and unwanted trips to the ER—all couched in terms such as “hot, hot” and “no, no.” Sam gave me a dubious look (not the first she's ever offered when one of my plans is explained to her). John studiously crinkled his brows, possibly wondering if my absurdity, like my dimples, is genetic. When the chalkboard gets boring and the cupboard isn't interesting, the Blue Line saves me. It took a surprisingly small number of “hot, hot” and “no, no” discussions for remaining outside the Line during meal preparation to become a habit.

Now I just need to give ‘the look’ or the ‘dramatic but silent finger point’ to send an errant toddler scuttling back across the line to safety. Generally there's giggling, as it's become a contest to see who can cross the line in the tiniest way. Thus far, John's pinky finger extended just slightly beyond the tape is the record holder. The look and the point, like the giggling and scuttling, are preferable to burns and panic and visits to the hospital.

There are pictures of John with his hand bandaged, and he's smiling in all of them. I smile now, too, as he and Sam help me cook—their help generally causing every kitchen-based activity to take three times longer. But the memory of a tiny hand slapped onto a hot oven door, the memory of a tiny scream, erases my smile still and makes my heart pound—not because of what hap-

pened but because of what could have happened. So many things other than a little hand could have touched that oven door.

My kitchen is still a hub of activity, from auto races on the linoleum to epic GI Joe versus Spiderman grudge matches on the table. My kitchen is a safer place than ever before, as John and Sam color with chalk, crawl in and out of their cupboard, and stay safely behind the blue line. ❤️

Run-of-the-Mill Safety Stuff

The Oven Door

If your oven is like mine, then the oven latch it already has (for the self-cleaning cycle) cannot be used during normal baking. While there are several varieties of latch available, none of them seem to have an adhesive attachment that can long survive normal wear-and-tear. To keep my latch in place, I used Gorilla Glue. This latch may now be a permanent part of the oven.

Knobs on the Stove

Generally, these slip over the peg on which the temperature control knobs for the stovetop rotate. They snap shut and can't be opened by little hands. But these same little hands can pull the entire apparatus off the stove, knob and cover combined. Use these until something better comes along. Then stop using them.

Drawer & Cupboard Latches

While there are many varieties of latches to hold drawers and cupboard doors shut, all of them are of a kind: one piece that connects to the wooden frame, another which connects to the door or drawer. Pull on the door/drawer and the latch engages; pull just a little and then reach in to push down on the latch and the latch doesn't engage. This simple safety measure works well to keep toddlers out of the knife drawer or cleanser storage cupboard. It takes a good amount of finger strength to push down on the latch. Of course, this means that elderly visitors, like my wife's grandparents, are also barred from grabbing a knife or a bottle of Windex.

First Aid Kit

Burns and cuts. These are the likely kitchen injuries, and the smaller, less severe of them can be handled with a bit of disinfectant cream, some kind of covering, and a kiss. Daddy kisses, however, are 27% less effective than Mommy kisses.

Vigilance

No latch or line on the floor substitutes for vigilance and good judgment. Use the burners on the back of the stove instead of always using the front. Don't run the TV or music if it means you'll pay less attention to the children. “Accidents happen,” John often tells me when we discuss potty training issues. And accidents do happen, but some accidents can be avoided.

Double Takes Jan/Feb 2013



1

Morris & Cate—FR
Age 3
Macon, Georgia



3

Kyan & Declan—FR
1 year
Haymarket, Virginia



7

Rachel & Paige—ID
Age 1 in photo—now 19-months
Lombard, Illinois



4

Cheyenne & Bryant—FR
Age 7
Westland Michigan



8

Charlotte & Erin—ID
Age: 6
Oldsmar, FL



2

Chase & Alex—FR
Age 4
Tulsa, Oklahoma



5

Kyra & Neela—ID
Age 5
Richmond, Texas



9

Autumn & Alexander—FR
Age 2
Blue Ridge, Georgia



6

Chelsea Rae & Amber Lee—FR
Age 6-months
South Africa, Empangeni,
Kwazulu Nata



10

Olivia & Clair—FR
Age 1 in photo—now 19 months
Round Lake, Illinois

Celebrating 29 Years with 29 Sets!



11

Gianna & Nicolette-FR
Age 4 in photo - now age 11
East Hanover, New Jersey



15

Skye & Scarlett-FR
Age 1
London, Ontario Canada



19

Chelsey & Kayla-FR
Age 4 - celebrating in
traditional Chinese outfits
Denver, Colorado



12

Peyton & Katelyn-FR
Age 4 in photo
Fredericksburg, Virginia



16

Katrina & Karmin-FR
Age 6
Elkhorn, Wisconsin



13

Morgan & Madison-FR
Age 1 in photo - now 17-months
Joliet, Illinois



17

Noah & Morgan-FR
Age 16
Citrus Heights, California



14

Joshua & Zachary-FR
Age 2
Sandusky, Ohio



18

Abby & Avery-FR
Age 4
Greensburg, PA



20

Joshua & Kelsey-FR
Age 6
McDade, Texas



21

Sarah Caleigh & Ashley Marie—FR
Age 6
Level Green, Pennsylvania



23

Matt & Sam—FR
Age 7
Hudson, New Hampshire



27

Jessica & Justin—FR
Age 5
Frankfort, Kentucky



24

Anara & Ivy—ID
Age 3 months in photo – now 14 months
Topeka, Kansas!



28

Jake & Gavin—FR
Age 1
Washington, DC



22

Cason & Hayden—FR
Age 1 year in photo – now 18-months
Asheville, NC



25

Angelo & Nicholas—FR
Age 8-months
Scottsdale, Arizona



29

Nick & James—FR
Age 14-months
Fort Collins, Colorado



26

Justin & Joshua—FR
Age 2
Cliffside Park, New Jersey



You Know You Have Multiples if . . .

by Kerri J. Reinbold, RN, BSN



Raising multiples is not glamorous; it's hard work. At times life feels like nothing more than a continuous cycle of eat, poop, sleep, and repeat. In fact, some days can only be described as draining at best. But buried beneath those seemingly endless diaper changes, heaps of last week's laundry, meals fit to feed an entire army, and the day's seventh clean up on aisle three, lives a parent's spirit. Often the driving force behind calming the chaos, it deserves a little boost now and then. If today you find your spirit in need of a bit of TLC, then the following was written just for you.

Unlike raising a singleton, being blessed with twins, triplets, or more is a beautiful but complicated undertaking. That's why bi-monthly we religiously read our issue TWINS Magazine looking for advice, community, commonality, a good laugh, and a gentle pat on the back. Sometimes all we hope for while flipping through the pages is the assurance that yes, we'll make it through another day with limbs, sanity, and spirits intact. We want to know we're not alone because it's true, the power of commonality lifts the spirit like no other.

There is yet another way parents of multiples meet the uplifting power of commonality. We've all experienced that fantastic feeling when while out getting the week's groceries our paths cross with those of a complete stranger who has multiples as well. The connection is instantaneous. We begin to swap stories and advice, and in doing so find ourselves less anxious and beginning to smile and laugh. We feel proud of what we've accomplished and our spirits get a much needed lift; in fact we could talk for hours if it weren't for the remainder of our shopping list. Isn't it true that the gist of these random exchanges could be summed up by the title, "You Know you Have Multiples if..."

So in honor of those blessed little chats in the produce section, and all the countless quirky ways parents of multiples might fill in the dots, come the following 15 possibilities. Understood best by those

of us who live and breathe our multiples everyday, see if you find yourself in any of the following scenarios. Keep in mind as well that when life seems to be handing you only diaper rashes, unidentifiable carpet stains, and mealtimes requiring a raincoat, slickers, and a pair of goggles, it's best just to laugh it off. You know you have multiples if...

1. After obtaining a much needed, not to mention overdue oil change for your vehicle, you find yourself asking the mechanic, "Does that come with a twin's discount?"
2. In the case of an unfortunate collision involving your stroller and a passing Hummer, the stroller takes the win, hands down.
3. As a kid you witnessed your grandmother continuously confusing your name with those of your other siblings. You swore you'd never do that with your kids, then came your multiples. Oops, you spoke too soon.
4. Speaking of your grandmother, a long and grueling pregnancy with multiples has turned your midsection into an exact replica of hers. Thanks grandma!
5. You and your spouse have decided it's high time to buy a Tivo for one reason and one reason only: Jon and Kate Plus Eight.
6. You've considered starting a buying club by opening up your basement to the general public on a weekly basis in an effort to unload all the outgrown clothes, toys, and gadgets that have created a virtual scaleable mountain your kids have now taken to climbing.
7. This is one of your most frequent thoughts: If someone saw it fit to give me multiples, I must have an extra pair of hands somewhere on my body that I don't know about. I really should look into finding them.
8. "Gapers Delay," a term synonymous with a big-city traffic jam, compliments of drivers who've slowed down to gawk at an

accident, is the most accurate description of what you cause in the parking lot of the local grocer while loading your multiples and your groceries into the car.

9. "You've got your hands full." Those are the five words most commonly uttered to you by the general public. Can't they do better than that?

10. In the shopping world of your dreams everything would come in a case.

11. Gandhi, Winston Churchill, and Abraham Lincoln are all heroes commonly cited by the average person. Your list looks a little different: your parents, the babysitter, and Jon and Kate Gosselin.

12. Your version of the ultra-luxurious "me time" involves a toothbrush, toothpaste, and two minutes by a sink.

13. You're certain your post-pregnancy stretch marks, if deciphered by an archeologist, are an encrypted map indicating the location of long lost buried treasure.

14. While others may look at you and your army of children with pity or bewilderment you know you wouldn't trade your life for any other, most days that is.

15. The gallery of people who see it fit to inform you that your twins must be twice the work, twice the headache, and twice the expense will never understand the truth: your twins are twice the joy, twice the laughter, and exponentially priceless. ♥

Kerri J. Reinbold, RN, BSN is a freelance writer from Western Michigan. She is a mother to Abe and Jake, 10 month old fraternal twin boys. She writes a monthly inspirational column for Women's Lifestyle Magazine that is fitness and nutrition minded. In her spare time she can be found giggling with her boys and husband, as well as hiking and reading. Laughter as good medicine has taken on a whole new meaning since giving birth to her boys.

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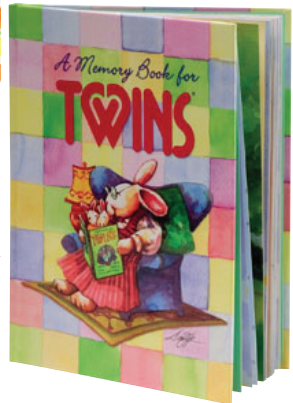
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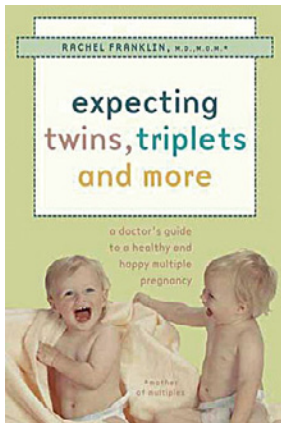
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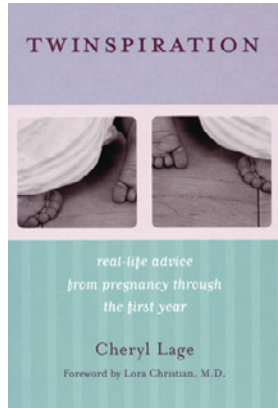


Boy / Girl Twin Story Packet

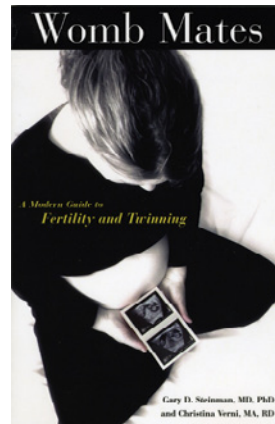
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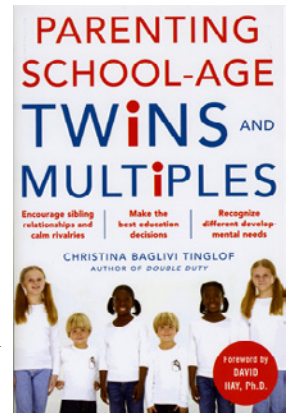
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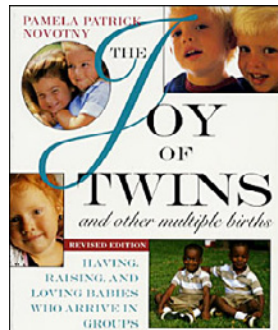
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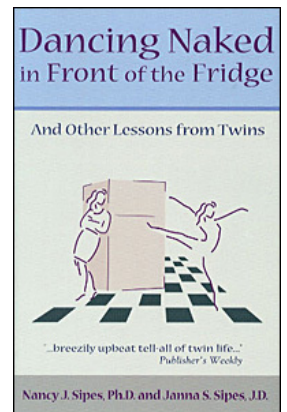
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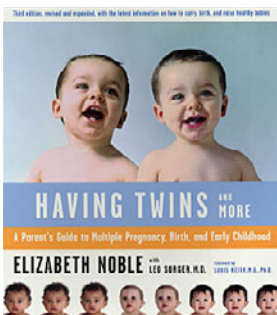
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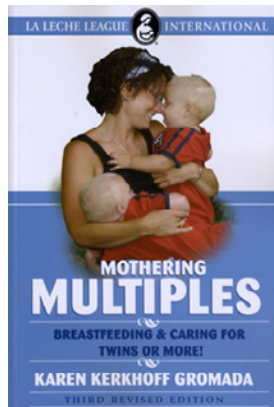
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