

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

# TWINS™

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

**Heading  
Back-2-  
School...  
Are You  
Ready?**

**Taking Twins  
from Crib to  
Bed** The End  
of an Era!

Removing the  
**In-Vitro Stigma**

**Simple Sleep  
Solutions!**

**July/August 2013**

**MILK FOR TWO**  
Breastfeeding Twins!





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Introducing these beautiful 12-year-old identical twin girls, Hannah and Brooke, from Tamarac, Florida!

They enjoy going to the beach almost all year round and also love to go ice skating with their friends. Playing soccer is their favorite hobby. They told us that one time in 3rd grade, they decided to switch classes for a day and at that time they had the same hair cut and wore the same uniform, so they looked exactly identical. Their teachers and classmates didn't even notice. Then, out of

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nowhere one of their teachers announced that they were going to have a math test from the previous day's lesson, so since they were not in the same class she didn't have a clue of the lesson and she got a D. That's when we agreed to never switch classes again!

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## SCHOOL DAYS OR SCHOOL DAZE

Summer is winding down and for many of us with school-aged kids; it means having to get our kiddos ready for another successful school-year! If you're like me, the structured routine of having them in school can be wonderful but the start of the school year is filled with so many activities and back to school nights it can make me feel a little "dazed". With double the lists of endless school supplies, school activity fees (time two) and all the new clothes we have to buy it can truly be overwhelming for parents. Throw in the added worry and stress that parents of twins/multiples are faced with each year... the tough decision whether to separate or not to separate your twins in school. This is an often agonizing decision and should not be made lightly. In the end, ultimately you and only you will truly know what is best for your twins! If you feel strongly that your twins are best together in the same classroom than advocate for them. If you feel like it would be better to request separate classrooms than advocate for them.

Every set of twins have different needs and that is why we at TWINS Magazine feel strongly that the decision to separate or not to separate is best left to those that know the children better than anyone, their parents and family members. Sadly, there have been many documented cases over the years citing incidents where overzealous school administrators would step in and take an extremely hard line with parents by forcing twins to be separated in school. These drastic measures had a long-term impact on the children and created anxiety and additional psychological issues for them.

Some twins thrive when they are together in the same class and other sets of twins thrive when apart. It is up to you as a parent of twins to decide what you feel works best for your children and to stand up for yours and their rights. This issue at one time had become so heated that several states had to pass "Twin School Legislation" prohibiting school districts from "forcing" twins to separate in school when parents wanted their twins together. You can visit <http://www.twinslaw.com> to see what your state is doing (or not doing). We also suggest you visit the TWINS Magazine website because we have a ton of resources and useful information regarding this heated subject. Here is a link for you to check out to learn more: <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/twins-school>.

We have some fantastic articles inside this issue on getting your twins ready for pre-school and Kindergarten so be sure to check it out! Even if you have toddlers, you will have to face these issues before you know it (believe me the time flies fast!) so it's always good to educate yourself early and often and get all the facts you need to make the best decision for your twins! Also inside this issue we celebrate "National Breastfeeding Month" with a great article on the benefits of breastfeeding twins and if you have ever struggled wondering when you make the move from their crib to a bed you are in luck because we tackle this very topic inside this issue. Also, Kenneth Strickland talks about how it is time to remove the IVF stigma that many have been given.

Before summer ends I encourage you all to go out and make memories with your twins! Go on a picnic, put a tent up in the backyard, get in a water balloon fight, blow bubbles, or catch lightning bugs... just spend time with your kids!



**Your time is the number one thing that your kids want the MOST!** My twins will already be turning 16 this year but I can still remember how much fun we always had swimming in the river when they were young and those memories are priceless to me. Your kids won't remember how much money you spent on them but they will remember all the time and effort you made to get to know each one individually and love them for all that they are! So enjoy every second and start making those memories!



Sincerely,

*Christa D Reed*

Christa Reed,  
Editor-in-Chief

Dear TWINS Editor:

This is Asher and Miles Burress from Hillsboro, Ohio! They were born on June 27, 2012, 7 weeks early and underwent 3 surgeries before they were even a day old! They are completely identical! Down to their birth weight and length, they both had duodenal Atresia (a condition in which a passage in the body is abnormally closed or absent.) They are always identical with their teeth coming in at the same time and their fevers are always basically identical! They are my wonder babies, because they amaze me more and more everyday!



Thanks,  
Shannon Ross, Via email

Dear TWINS:

These are my identical twins, Trace (left) & Tucker (right) from Lexington, Tennessee. They are 21 months old and have a very unique story. They were born at 26 weeks (3 months premature) and were born in the front seat of our Tahoe on the way to the hospital. Trace was born about a mile from the hospital and then Tucker in the parking lot of the hospital. This was at a small town hospital that does not deliver babies.



The emergency room people,

doctors, and paramedics along with help from God, all did an amazing job to keep them alive. Trace weighed 2lbs 2oz and was 14 inches long and Tucker weighed 1lb 12 oz and was 13 inches long. They had to spend 68 days in the NICU at General Hospital in Jackson, Tennessee. Everyone in our community came together and prayed for our two sweet babies and I know that's why they are here today. Now, they are both healthy and doing great and we think of them as our two little miracles that fought hard to stay in this world. Thank you and hope this story can be inspiration for someone who has a child or multiples in the NICU. Thanks!

Sincerely,  
Robbie Burke, Via email

Hi TWINS Magazine,

My name is Dylan Tuccillo. I'm an indie filmmaker and for the last two years I've been working on a dramatic feature film about identical twin sisters and have already casted the roles with actual identical twins (Ashley & Kimberly Carvalho). I thought it'd be really interesting to see real-life sisters act side-by-side, something I've never seen in a movie before in a serious film. The film's composer and music recorders are twin brothers as well (fraternal). Now we're raising money for the film on Kickstarter.

com. I want to get the word out to twins and their parents, so that we can make this a reality. It'd be a huge help if you could post about our project on your Facebook page and share with your readers! Twins are always portrayed in comedic or circus-like ways; we're not doing that in this film. I think twins and their families would enjoy seeing the Carvalhos in the lead roles. Any help you can give to spread the word would be hugely appreciated! You can learn more about the movie here:

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/528299030/out-of-the-trees-a-suspenseful-feature-film>

Thanks,  
Dylan Tuccillo, Via Facebook

## TWINS DO RUN IN FAMILIES...

Dear Editor:

I wanted to send you a photo of the 3 sets of Simpson twins in my immediate family! My sister, brother and I all had a set of fraternal twins! My 19-month-old fraternal twin girls, Finnley & Roxanne Hague and we live in Bella Vista, Arkansas. My sister Laura's 10-year-old fraternal twin girls, Phoebe & Sophie Sanders and younger sister, 4-year-old Heidi (blue shirt) from Little Rock, Arkansas and holding my 19-month-old babies are my brother Drew's 9-year-old fraternal twin girls, Anna Kate & Caroline Simpson and younger sibling Lauren, age 4 in the yellow shirt, from Conway, Arkansas! Proud grandfather, Harrell A. Simpson is also in this priceless family photo!



From left: Lauren, Heidi, Sophie, Anna Kate, Roxanne, Caroline, Finnley and Phoebe

## TWINS DATING TWINS!

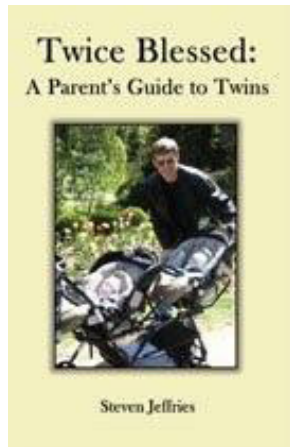
Dear Twins Editor:

I've been reading TWINS Magazine since my identical twin girls were born 17-years-ago. I noticed you use photos of twins inside your magazine and I have a great one! Here is a picture of my identical twin girls with their boyfriends—they are dating identical twin boys and I think it would be a really cute picture to include in your magazine. They are 17 and we live in California.



Thanks,  
Kym Gustafson, via email

## Father of twins Steven Jeffries lends his helpful advice to other parents of multiples in 'Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins'



Author and father of twins Steven Jeffries uses his knowledge of parenting twins to give handy tips to other parents of multiples through his blog, and multiple parenting magazines for parents of multiples. Drawing upon the knowledge he has gained in his six years of parenting twins, Jeffries has provided his extensive experience and expertise to readers of *Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins*.

Although most parents experience some challenges with the arrival of their new baby, twins present a unique set of tests. Knowing that multiples can be a daunting proposition for most parents, Jeffries presents an informative and easy to read guide to help put expectant and new parents' minds at ease, presenting a plethora of information on everything from preparing for the arrival of twins through the early elementary years. Readers learn which classes are beneficial, what products work for twins, and which organizations to join. Jeffries includes helpful hints on topics ranging from choosing the right stroller to finding the right daycare. Not only does Jeffries offer his experiences as a parent, he also brings his role as an elementary school teacher to the forefront as he discusses issues that may arise in daycare, kindergarten, and beyond. From issues of separating twins in the classroom to advocating effectively for each child, his knowledge and expertise shine through. An absolute necessity for parents of twins, *Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins* is filled with lively anecdotes and practical advice from someone who has been through the joys and challenges of having twins. Jeffries's experience and easy flow of information makes this guide a delight to read, and a must-have for parents of multiples.

## Jumelle Twin (Multiples) and Baby Tracker

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multiples' grandparents, child care centres, out of town parent, physicians. Loaded with hints, tips, suggestions, and solutions! Don't struggle in a sleep-deprived fog to remember which twin, triplet or quadruplet did what. The **Jumelle Twin and Baby Tracker** App does it all for you.

<http://jumelle.ca/>

## NOMOTC Holds their 53rd Annual National Convention at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona

The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) held their 53rd Annual Convention on July 21-27, 2013 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. The convention was hosted by the Paradise Valley Mothers of Multiples (PVMOM) of Arizona, a member club of NOMOTC.

As part of their mission, NOMOTC provides an abundance of research in excess of 100 studies for the purpose of informing and educating parents and caregivers on conditions that may be more frequently experienced with multiple births. In addition, NOMOTC provides support resources to help parents and caregivers survive the "day-to-day" in the caring for and raising multiples.



Although recently released 2010 CDC data indicate that both the twinning and triplet rates are on a slight decline from 2009 ([http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr60/nvsr60\\_01.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr60/nvsr60_01.pdf)), there is a steady population of multiples who are becoming school-age and older, given previously released data. As multiples get older, concerns and issues continue to exist, however, they evolve. NOMOTC recognizes this and continues to provide further support to meet members' changing needs.

Being a parent and/or care giver to multiples has both its unique concerns and countless rewards. Each year, NOMOTC holds a convention as an opportunity to discuss current and emerging issues as they relate to multiple births and to review and update organizational policies and practices. It is also an opportunity to: elect board of directors, discuss and vote on by-law amendments, hear thought-provoking keynote speakers, participate in motivational workshops and network with and learn from club leaders and parents/caregivers of multiples from all over the US. This is the first-time the annual convention has been in Phoenix and because it was at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa, it was the ideal location for multiples' parents/caregivers to acknowledge and embrace the importance of taking time for themselves. For more information on NOMOTC's convention or the organization, please visit [www.nomotc.org](http://www.nomotc.org)

# SUNTANS AND (GASP) SUNBURNS ARE SO YESTERDAY, MOM!

by Wendy Irvine

**B**ack in the day we oiled, baked and glistened come summer. And none of us dreamed that decades later the world would learn that Steven Spielberg's great white was just a pup — compared to the great yellow we loved to worship called: the sun.

Today, as if moms of multiples don't have enough worries, along comes summer delivering a daily dose of potential skin damage to our darlings. The adult in us knows that we need to pour on the sunscreen. But our inner child screams, "oh come on! Summer is fun! Living outdoors from morning to dinner is what childhood is all about. I don't want to hassle my kids all day long with sun block!"

Well, phenomenal news, mommies: the great outdoors is once again a pleasure paired with ample sunblock and the latest and greatest in SPF swim wear and clothing.

That's for dorks, you say? Get this: even the crown prince of American coutour, Ralph Lauren himself, is onto something and is now offering a to-drool-for rash guard that any twenty-something would be honored to wear. It's hardly a bargain at \$1500, but the point is that rash guards have slipped off the goofball meter and landed front and center on the hip and cool's must wear list.

And, along with Ralph, that's exactly what one new mom in Florida also concluded on an outing that would change her life.

"Years ago, I took a short walk with my newborn, Chase, for about fifteen minutes," says Jennifer Clement, owner of [www.sunfriendly-products.com](http://www.sunfriendly-products.com). "And he came home fried. My husband said, 'if he can't handle a little bit of sun: good luck with the beach.'"

After that momentous sunburn, Clement and her husband, Ryan, now parents to three kids and both former dot-comers, heeded the calling to build a business SPF-ing the children of our planet.

"It really bothers me when I see a little girl in a bikini," says Clement. "Sure it looks cute, but at what cost?"

While Clement and her husband are excited to see parents adhering to safer sun habits, they also know many still need convincing. If you're in the latter's camp, ponder the following:

**So Yesterday** ~ "A little bit of tan looks healthy", you think, "all kids get darker in the summer!"

**Get Hip** ~ Any color is damage to the skin say every dermatologist worth their weight in wrinkle cream. Sure, a tan looks "darling" on your kids, but at what price? We all know adults who are visiting the dermo regularly to get "things cut off". Yuck. Sun exposure can lead to melanoma. Any questions?

**So Yesterday** ~ "I don't want to shell out big bucks for that SPF swim wear," you say.

**Get Hip** ~ The prices have dropped considerably on quality SPF wear. You no longer need to dole out a whopping fifty dollars on a SPF suit for your kids.

Additionally, the more skin you cover with SPF wear, the less sun block to buy—and with the savings, you can book a trip to the Bahamas!

**So Yesterday** ~ "But I want my children to feel the water and swathed in SPF bathing suits they likely don't even know they're in a pool!"

**Get Hip** ~ "The Solaroo SPF fabric that we stand by is lightweight and dries quickly," says Clement. "Also you're not missing places with the sun block which gives parents greater peace of mind."

**So Yesterday** ~ "Doctors say babies up to six months old shouldn't wear sun block so we stay home," you say.

**Get Hip** ~ "Our SPF sheets and blankets are ideal for active parents," says Clement. "Tie one of them around the jogger and when the baby needs protection you're ready."

**So Yesterday** ~ "Well, I'll dress my kids in the SPF swim wear, but you won't catch me in that stuff!"

**Get Hip** ~ Let's revisit: there's nothing sexy about having weird things cut off at the dermo's office. And worse, there's nothing "hot" about panicking that the weird thing has metastasized into a deadly form of cancer. Your children don't need you to look fashionable; they need you to be healthy.

**Cool Mom Tip** ~ Want safe color? Don't miss [www.sunless.com](http://www.sunless.com). This site is a mecca for moms seeking a healthy glow. One tantalizing pick: a chocolate scented tanning mousse called Savage Bronze.

Life just got easier for moms of multiples (don't look so shocked!). SPF bathing suits? Check. UVA/UVB sun block and sunglasses? Check. Chocolate sun mousse? Check. A mom who can breath easier? Check. Now Generation JAWS can have the great outdoors — and actually let their kids play in it too. Sort of. ♥

## Clip & Save Worthy ~

- The "alert" zone for high sun exposure is between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- A shot glass worth of sun block applied to your child (depending on size) thirty minutes before going in the sun and again after being in the water is a smart rule of thumb.
- Freckles are a sign that some sun damage has already occurred.
- Children with moles should be evaluated by a dermatologist.
- Babies up to six months should stay out of the sun entirely.
- For protection from both UVA and UVB rays, scan your sunscreen label for at least one these products: Titanium dioxide & zinc oxide or avobenzone.
- Same goes for eyes: the optometrists and ophthalmologists are urging all of us to protect our children's eyes with quality sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.
- Today's "no touch" rule applied to camp counselors is resulting in children not getting proper amounts of sun block. Dress your child in SPF clothing, a hat and teach how to apply sun block thoroughly.
- Educating your child is the key to lifelong sun smarts — and, if that doesn't work: nag!

# Join TWINS™ Magazine at the International Twins Association's Annual Convention

## Labor Day Weekend at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas!



# TWINS

We are pleased to be the official media sponsor for this fun annual event open to all twins and higher order multiples AND parents with twins and higher order multiples so we hope you will make plans to join us **August 29 through September 2, 2013** at the beautiful Orleans Hotel & Casino



that weekend. There will be a variety of fun and social activities you can participate in throughout

the weekend including attending a Comedy Show, Golf and Bowling tournaments and a chance to meet other parents and twins/multiples from all over the world!

One of the major highlights of the weekend will take place on Saturday, August 31st when attendees will have the opportunity to sign up to take the chartered, narrated tour on a luxury coach to see the Hoover Dam, Lake Mead, and the Colorado River. The tour will include the dam discovery, with full access to the generator room, the visitor's center, photo exhibit hall, museum, and theater featuring "the construction of the Hoover Dam". The group will also stop at the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign for photo ops. The tour also includes

a delicious box lunch, water and non-alcoholic beverages.

On Saturday night the group will head to downtown Las Vegas to see their own private show and dinner in the ballroom at the top of the "D" Hotel and Casino. The dinner show is called "Marriage Can Be Murder" which is a super interactive theater experience, and was awarded the best of Las Vegas by the readers and editors of the Las Vegas Review Journal in 2013. Afterwards, they will head off to visit Freemont Experience & Light Show—a must see while in Vegas.

For young twins and multiples, they won't want to miss the annual twins/multiples contest on Sunday afternoon where sets of twins and multiples are judged in a variety of fun categories (most alike babies, most alike twins, least alike, oldest, youngest, most alike triplets, etc.) and their photos may even end up inside an upcoming issue of TWINS Magazine! As their official media sponsor, we will be there and get to judge this fun event so be sure to come by and say hello!

On Sunday evening the convention ends with a themed "Mardi Gras" Dinner & Dance along with a Mardi Gras mask contest! They are asking attendees to create and wear their own "original masks" which will be judged and the winner will win a fantastic prize. That evening they will also host their annual talent show; 50/50 cash split raffle, and a silent auction, where attendees are asked to bring hand-crafted, or other special items to be auctioned off to help support the nonprofit organization and to cover costs of the annual event.

**For more information on the ITA annual convention in Las Vegas visit their website at: <http://www.intltwins.org/index.php/en/convention-info> ♥**



### ITA Convention has Discounted Room Rates!

By using the special ITA Convention Group Code: A3TIC08 when booking a room at the Orleans Hotel & Casino, you will receive a special discounted rate: \$30.00 per night (Sunday-Thursday) and only \$79.00 per night on (Friday & Saturday)! Plus tax and nightly resort fee. Click on this link to make your reservation and be sure to use the ITA Convention Group Code!

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# Our Camp Secret

by Amy Davidson Lombardo  
and Jacqueline Davidson Kopito

Every summer, my identical twin sister, Jackie and I would go to sleep away camp for eight weeks and towards the end of the school year we would count the days left until the first day of camp. Our camp was called CYJ and it was a co-ed camp with a ton of water sports on a beautiful lake and many other activities including tennis, softball, volleyball, basketball, camping, arts & crafts, drama and dancing. Many of our girlfriends were there and many cute boys that we couldn't wait to see again too.

Jackie and I were in the same bunk with fourteen of our friends. The best time at camp was when we were supposed to be going to sleep. This is when all our friends would stay up late talking and trying to stay out of trouble. One night, a few of the girls in our bunk suggested a raid to bunk #13 because most of the girls, including me, liked the boys in that bunk. However, the #1 rule at camp was that campers weren't allowed to leave the bunks after bedtime, let alone scooter across camp into the boys' area. If a camper got caught by a counselor she could get kicked out of camp, but most of the time, the camper would just be grounded or docked. You never wanted to get grounded because then you couldn't do anything all day, but stay in the bunk being miserable which could last up to three or four days (UGH!).

I wasn't going to let a little rule get in my way of going on a raid and either were half the girls in my bunk. I asked Jackie if she was coming along. To my surprise, Jackie was scared of getting caught and told me she wasn't going. Why was she being such a goody-goody? Was this actually my twin sister? Where was my twin that would throw water balloons at the girls when they were acting like babies or have mud slide races when we weren't suppose to be playing in the rain? What was happening to Jackie? Plus, I knew she liked a boy in bunk #13 that she wanted to see. I didn't understand and I was completely annoyed. My last words to her were that she was going to miss out on all the fun and that she would wish she had come along with me. Jackie was being a fool!!

It was a moonless night making us almost invisible as we ran silently across the field. Within minutes, we arrived safely at bunk #13. The boys were surprised, but very happy to see us and rushed us inside. It was really fun to be out of our bunk this late at night and we sat huddled together on the floor of the bunk listening to funny stories and flirting with the boys. Thankfully, the trip back to our bunk went off without a hitch, and as soon as I slipped inside my bunk I ran to Jackie's bed to wake her up and tell her all about the great night. But to my surprise she wasn't there. Where could she be? I decided to sit on Jackie's bed and wait for her!

While sitting there wondering what to do next, Jackie crept into the bunk very quietly, not wanting to wake anyone up. "Where were you?" I whispered. Jackie replied, "I waited and waited for you and



then I couldn't wait anymore so I went looking for you. I thought something happened to you because you were taking so long. And then on my way to boys area, Benny, (*the Director of the Athletic Department*) caught me." "Oh no! Does he know about the rest of us going on the raid?" "No, he doesn't know or suspect anything," Jackie said. "I told him that a girl in our bunk dared me to get a pair of sneakers from boy's bunk #13 and bring them back to our bunk." "Great cover up, but did he believe you," I asked. Jackie said that not only did he believe her but he seemed amused by the story, saying he would sleep on it and decide whether or not to report her to the Director of Girls." I couldn't believe this. After my successful raid with the girls, Jackie goes looking for me and now she gets caught! What was she thinking? We both went to sleep a little annoyed with each other and hoped that Jackie wouldn't get grounded!

I tossed and turned all night, and couldn't stop thinking of how Jackie risked getting into trouble for me, when she didn't even want to go in the first place. Now she was the one who could get grounded. I decided then and there that if she got grounded I would turn myself in and get grounded too.

We were on our way to breakfast when all of a sudden, Benny caught up with us and took Jackie aside. A few minutes later, they asked me to join in the conversation. Benny then told me the same thing he just told Jackie. He said, "I am letting Jackie off the hook and you too, because I have a suspicion that you had something to do with this as well. It will be our secret, but if I catch either one of you again you will have to pay the price". "Thank you Benny! Thank you!" I blurted out as Jackie and I gave him a big hug and then we both dashed off to breakfast.

*Final Twin Thought: Sometimes sisters and good friends can be chicken heads... but let them be! ♥*



# Caution

## Mother at Work!

by Ruby Coats-Mosher

The greatest risk associated with a multiple pregnancy is premature delivery. It has been estimated that half of all twins and three-quarters of all triplets are born

prematurely, or before the 37th week of gestation. Exactly why premature labor occurs is not completely understood, but contributing factors may include

poor nutrition; physical and mental stress; infection; metabolic disease; and uterine, placental or cervical anomalies. Although additional explanations for premature labor with multiple births concern the overstretching of the uterus and overcrowding, this seems somewhat less likely because of the number of healthy, well-nourished women who have given birth to normal-weight babies at term.

Since the precise cause of preterm labor is not known, there is no guaranteed method of prevention for all women. There are, however, some practical steps that a woman can take to reduce the risk of going into premature labor. These include securing early specialized prenatal care; strictly following physicians' instructions; keeping to a balanced and nutritious diet; reducing stress as much as possible; utilizing the physical and emotional support of others to cope with that which is inevitable; getting plenty of rest; and recognizing the signs of impending preterm labor. Before being able to recognize what is abnormal for her pregnancy, however, a woman

must be familiar with her body to be able to recognize what is normal for her.

### False Labor

The uterine wall contains a powerful muscle which contracts periodically throughout a woman's life. Many non-pregnant women feel these contractions during menstruation as "cramps".

Pregnant women experience two types of uterine contractions: non-labor, or Braxton-Hicks contractions; and the regular contractions which result in childbirth.

Braxton-Hicks contractions are also known as false labor and are usually painless. They may be felt as a tightening or hardening of the abdomen occurring at somewhat irregular intervals. A variety of things, ranging from changing positions or activities can also make Braxton-Hicks contractions diminish.

False labor contractions, unlike those of true labor, do not get progressively close together, and usually occur less than four times per hour and last for only 25 seconds or so. Frequency and duration of contractions vary from pregnancy to pregnancy, however, so it is important that each woman become familiar with her own normal uterine activity.

It is suggested that a pregnant woman take every day to monitor her uterine contractions. This doesn't mean that a woman should spend time worrying about contractions and whether



they may lead to premature labor—quite the contrary. The time should be spent relaxing and simply becoming acquainted with the natural rhythms of her uterus.

One way for a woman to monitor her contractions is to lie down with a pillow behind her back so she is supported slightly onto her left side. Then, using her fingertips, she should press her abdomen gently in various locations, feeling the shape and firmness of her uterus. It can be helpful at first for a health care professional to show a woman how to palpate her uterus and to feel for contractions.

When the uterus is relaxed, it is easily indented with the fingertips. While the uterine wall is soft, the babies can be felt. It is easy for a woman to mistake the firm feel of multiple heads and bottoms as a contraction, but with experience she'll learn to distinguish the hard "bumps" of babies from a contraction in which the entire uterus tightens into a hard globular shape, and then relaxes.

It may also be difficult for a woman carrying multiples to feel contractions simply because her uterus is stretched so tight that it always seems firm. But an electronic fetal monitor strapped over the abdomen can pick up contractions even when a woman can't.

A doctor may prescribe a home electronic monitor for patients at risk for premature labor. The monitor belt is worn for a specified period of time, then the unit is hooked up to either a telephone or computer so data can be relayed to a medical center where it is then interpreted by a nurse or physician, who decides if the mother needs further attention at that time.

Whether a woman registers her contractions herself, or they are electronically monitored, the duration of a contraction is times from the point when the uterus begins to tighten to the point of relaxation. The interval between contractions is timed from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next one.

A record of monitoring sessions helps track trends toward longer or more frequent contractions. Along with the contraction times, a woman may also want to record her activities prior to the monitoring session, in case it may become evident that activities such as crying, sex, or balancing the checkbook may trigger an increase in contractions.

## Preterm Labor

Women carrying multiples may experience increased preterm contractions which could be a sign of impending preterm labor. As opposed to Braxton-Hicks contractions, preterm labor contractions become progressively longer, stronger and closer together. Also, the contractions of labor are associated with the cervix beginning to dilate, soften and shorten.

If a woman detects any of the signs of preterm labor, she should call her doctor at once, because if labor can be detected before the cervix undergoes significant change and before the membranes have ruptured, the medical team has the best chance of forestalling delivery. Bedrest and increased fluid intake can sometimes stop the progression of early preterm labor.

If contractions continue to be regular, occurring four or more times per hour, and the cervix begins to show changes, medication is usually indicated to manage the contractions. There are drugs commonly prescribed and used to quiet the uterine muscle and to manage preterm labor.

The statistics for preterm labor among women carrying multiples can be intimidating, but a woman can do much to weight the odds in her favor. A woman carrying twins or more need not—and should not—be afraid that she will deliver early. What she should do is educate herself about the potential problems, take good care of herself, and work closely with her obstetrician.

It does appear that a woman who monitors her labor has a greater chance of delivering near term, and the extra effort is surely worth it. Each day in nature's

most perfect incubator—the womb—is a priceless gift from a mother to her unborn babies.

As early in pregnancy as possible, it is advisable for an expectant mother to consult her obstetrical caregiver about the signs of preterm labor. Also, it is helpful for her to discuss what to do if she has a concern or is she thinks she may be going into premature labor. She should find out if she should call her physician first or go immediately to the hospital's labor and delivery unit. ♥

## Is it Labor...Yes or No?

The following signs are generally recognized as indicators of possible premature labor and should be monitored and reported to your medical provider.

- Regular uterine contractions occurring four or more times per hour—false labor contractions will usually diminish after a time, or with a change in position; true labor contractions will continue. It is important to know that labor contractions may not be painful, or even uncomfortable.
- Menstrual-like cramps—these lower-abdominal cramps may be rhythmic or constant.
- Lower, dull backache—backache is common in pregnancy, but this will feel different than previous backaches. The ache may be continuous or intermittent, and may radiate to your sides or front.
- Pelvic or thigh pressure—again, this pressure will seem different than previously experienced and may be persistent or rhythmic.
- Intestinal cramps, diarrhea, or abdominal gas pains.
- Vaginal discharge of water, mucus or blood—Discharge can be a sudden rush or a persistent leaking. Bloody discharge can range from pinkish to brownish.
- Any general feeling that something is "different"—although nothing outwardly appears wrong, you may be subconsciously in tune with subtle changes occurring.





INFANT

A Simple Way to Get Your Twins To

by Allison Randall Gatt

# *Sleep Longer at Night*

**Allison Randall Gatt**

is a blogger, freelance writer, library science grad student, and the mother of three little girls—a set of fraternal twins and their big sister. Her other resume highlights include working as a baker, and a chef's assistant, and a fifteen-year career as a belly dancer.



When you bring home those double (or triple) bundles of joy, you divide the amount of sleep you're getting. Sleep and sanity were a big priority when we brought home our fraternal twin girls, so once we got through the first weeks of foot-dragging, gritty-eyed sleep deprivation, we knew it was time to work on getting everyone a good night's sleep. Thank heaven; I had a friend who shared this simple and effective method to get her 'twinfant' boys to sleep all night.

### Here's how to do it:

Bridget let me in on her little secret—with relatively little work 'sleep-training', she stretched out her boys' nighttime sleep little by little. She did it like this: when the first baby woke, she tucked him in the swing to rock for as long as she could (even ten minutes the first few times is sufficient) before she woke the other and feeding them both.

By feeding your babies at the same time, you'll be better able to get them to sleep at the same time. I was fortunate enough to be able to tuck the waking twin in her Boppy chair with a pacifier for 30-40 minutes before she started to really fuss, or her sister woke up. While I couldn't go back to sleep during this time—leaving her in her chair would have been unsafe—I could at least catch up with my Facebook friends at 2am. The investment in sleep for the future, long-term, is what you're aiming for.

For example: After sleeping for four hours, Twin A wakes at 2am. Get her up and whisk her into the Boppy, the swing or the rocker. Try to maintain at least ten minutes of calm and then wake Twin B. Feed them both.

The next night, when Twin B wakes at 2:30am, hold her off until 2:45, then wake Twin A and feed them both. Try to stretch this block of night sleep to six or seven hours. After a week of doing this, both of my little girls were sleeping at least eight hours, just a few days shy of ten weeks old.

It might take a bit of work (get your partner involved, and make it teamwork) but when your twins are giving you a good night's sleep, you can hi-five everyone in your family and smile, because you're relatively well-rested.

### Before you start:

Make sure your little critters are old enough and big enough. They should be between seven and eight pounds, and at least six weeks old. Premies are a whole other ballgame, and they'll take a little longer to adjust to this thing called life. Remember when a book or an expert says to start something at a certain age; you're really counting from their due date, not their actual date of birth.

I highly recommend getting your twins or multiples on a regular schedule of eating and sleeping. If you're not ready to get that regimented, then try at least to feed them at the same time. Give them an extra feed or two in the evening to 'top-up' and make bedtime an especially calm and soothing with cozy pajamas and a quick story or a song. This will give them the idea that now is the time to relax and go to sleep for the night.

Remember, it may be a bit of work, but with a plan in mind, you're investing in a well-rested future—you and your children's. ♥

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From

# Crib to bed

by Janet Gonzalez-Mena

*the End of an Era*

**Janet Gonzalez-Mena**

lives in Napa, California and taught early childhood education at Napa Valley College. She is author of the book 'Dragon Mom' and the mother of five children.

Thump. I remember that sound as plain as day—the sound my son made when he climbed out of his crib for the first time. He managed the feat easily, swinging both of his feet over the bars of his crib, dropping or slithering down the side, and landing without hurting himself.

But the thump I heard was definitely him hitting the floor. I leapt at the sound and met him at the door of his room, as he came waddling toward my bedroom with a big grin on his face. "Free at last!" his smile said to me.

Climbing out of the crib is a big moment for tots, and the end of an era for their parents. With their newfound freedom, twins

can't just be put to bed and be expected to stay. So what do parents do when cribs can no longer contain their toddler twins?

## *Beyond the Crib*

For some parents, this event prompts a move to "regular" beds. Other parents continue to use the cribs, but leave the sides down, so it is not so dangerous for them to climb out. Other take out the crib mattresses and put them on the floor so the danger of climbing is eliminated. Cribs can be used for years—but most parents get rid of baby furniture long before their children reach kindergarten.

Replacing the furniture is the easy part. The hard part is getting children to sleep when they are no longer physically



confined. If the going-to-sleep routine has been fairly easy all along, the lack of confinement probably won't create problems once the children get used to the change. But children who fight bedtime or have trouble settling down can make things hard for parents once they find themselves with freedom from crib bars. What do parents do then? It may take a period of constantly and patiently hauling the wandering child (or children) back to bed every time they get out. It may seem to take forever, but most parents find that, if they are consistent, their children do eventually learn to stay in their beds.

Some parents find that it helps to put their children to sleep in a very routine way at the same time every night so the children are used to the regularity. Others look for signs of sleepiness and put them down then. Both the by-the-clock parent and the on-demand parent may use a bedtime ritual designed to settle the children down and give them the message that it's sleeping time. Usually, rituals are created jointly by parent and children and may include music and a story. But they may vary, even within the same family. "Tickie!" demands Shelby, thrusting a foot in her mother's face. Since she learned to climb out of her crib at about age 18 months, she's found she can enjoy her mother for a longer period of time in the evening. Now she's allowed to stay up a bit after bath, jammies and tooth brushing so she can snuggle on the couch. When she asks for her foot massage, it means she's starting to get sleepy. Her mother knows the pattern well and scratches the sole of her daughter's foot until she notices Shelby start to play with her fingers, stroking them very gently—always an indication that it's time for sleep. Her mother gets up and puts her into her bed, and then sits with her a short time, scratching her feet until Shelby, predictably, drops off.

Amanda, on the other hand, who hasn't yet learned to climb out of the crib, snuggles nightly with her daddy and a special blanket while her twin sister, Shelby is getting her "tickie". It's easy to put her into bed after the snuggle, because she goes right to sleep with her thumb and her "blankie" to help her along. She has her own comfort devices and doesn't need adult help usually, though she does enjoy a foot massage, too, now and then.

Children have their own ways of getting to sleep. For a few children, it's easy. All they have to do is get into a horizontal position when tired, and their eyes close just like a doll. But most need more than a horizontal position. Many have developed self-soothing skills. Shelby strokes her fingers; Amanda sucks her thumb. In addition, Amanda has a comfort device—her "blankie". Other common comfort devices are special pillows or stuffed animals.

Toddler twins who have slept in separate cribs may choose to sleep together once they can get to each other. If this arrangement is disruptive to the children's sleep or is otherwise not in the children's best interest, parents may choose to teach their twins to sleep apart through gentle training and constant insistence that they get back in their own beds.

## To Share or Not to Share

Once toddlers have the ability to climb into their parents' bed on their own, many will often do so. If parents want to keep their bed a "no-kid-zone," then it's important for them not to be wishy-washy about this rule. Bedtime conflicts can trigger enormous power struggles if parents become too "heavy-handed" when dealing with

their toddler twins. It's important that when parents put their children back to their own beds, they reassure them that they're not being abandoned. The children need to know that the parent is still close by. It may take continual reassurance and reminders on the part of the parent, however, before children finally soothe themselves and fall asleep.

Problems getting toddlers to bed and keeping them there often have more to do with parental attitude than the techniques they use. A parent who has been gone all day may have some internal conflict about making his children go to bed instead of spending time with them. Even though this parent may be firm about bedtime, the children pick up on his ambivalence and react to it by resisting sleeping. The parents who have the easiest time getting children to sleep are those who are sensitive to their children as individuals and are clear about their need for sleep.

It becomes especially difficult to deal with bedtime when toddlers are over-tired. An evening out can disrupt sleeping schedules and make bedtime extra hard. Or if parents miss the signals that it's time to put a child to bed, they may find that he has gotten wound up and may be hard to settle back down.

Some children stay up until they drop from exhaustion because no one reads their earlier cues. Timing is critical when it comes to putting children to bed.

Persistence is also important. A firm but gentle insistence on "back in bed" is the way to deal with the questions, "What do I do when they learn to crawl out of their cribs?" ♥

## Keeping them Cozy in their Cribs

- Be kind but firm. When they get up, insist that they go back. Escort them if they don't go on their own.
- Be clear in your own mind that bed is where you want them. If you're ambivalent, they'll know it.
- Make a bed a place where they're used to sleeping. It helps if they know when they climb in what they're supposed to do there. Don't use beds for punishment!
- If the environment doesn't already say "sleep", consider ways you can transform it. Create a peaceful atmosphere by lowering the light and eliminating noise. Soft music can help. Put toys out of sight as much as possible.
- If you don't already have one, create a bedtime routine that includes an unwinding period and takes individual needs into consideration.
- Encourage self-soothing skills. The more that each child can calm himself, the easier your job will be when it comes to bedtime.
- Some children settle down better with a heavy blanket on top of them. Try this and any other safe "tucking in" measure, like putting covers tightly around them, to reassure them that they're safe and cozy in their cribs.



by Chéla Wallace

# Getting Ready for PRESCHOOL



**Chéla Wallace** is the mother of three boys (including twins) and is a freelance writer who lives and works in the Portland, Oregon area. Her articles have been featured in local newspapers, as well as *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Twins and More* and *TWINS Magazine*. In addition to her creative writing, she has been a technical and business writer/copy-editor for over 16 years.

You did your research, talked to other parents of twins/multiples and found a great preschool for your children. It will be the first school experience for all of you, and you are filled with questions: "Are my children ready? What if they cry? What if I cry? What do I need to buy? Should my twins/multiples be in the same class? What if my children are the first in the world to not make it in preschool?" All these questions and more go through most parents' minds...and everyone, including parents, survives.

As you prepare for preschool, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Should the children be in the same class?** This concern is unique to parents of twins/multiples. Keeping your children together is usually a good idea, as it can make separation from the parent easier. After the children settle in, they often gravitate to the activities they enjoy most and don't stay together the entire class time. As the year goes by, the teacher can help the children find their own way by seating them apart and by directing them into different play areas.
- **Arrange some playdates with friends.** This will help the children adjust to being apart from you. Start with a very short time, as little as 15 minutes (using a kitchen timer to make

"As parents, we often think we can talk away children's anxiety, when in reality it only makes them more anxious. Always answer their questions in a positive way and reiterate that school will be fun."

this more concrete). Even if they cry, leave with a kiss and a smile. The quick return will help them learn you always come back.

- **If you can, visit the preschool, meet the staff and ask to look around.** At the least, drive by the school, point it out and talk about the coming year. This helps create a sense of ownership for the children. Find out the teacher's name and talk about the things your children will be doing in class: "Teacher Susan will have so many fun things for you to do when you go to school: Play-Doh, painting and singing lots of songs."
- **Get a list of things your children need for school and go shopping together.** Kids love to help pick out their school supplies, especially their backpacks (and lunch boxes, if needed). Your children will feel they have a hand in getting ready for their big adventure!
- **Make a contact list.** With their permission, make a list of the names and phone numbers of friends and relatives whom your children know and whom the school can contact in case of an emergency or if you are delayed and need someone else to pick up your children.
- **Be sure your children are up-to-date on immunizations.** Most states require this for all preschoolers.
- **If your children get upset when you talk about school, just let it go.** As parents, we often think we can talk

away children's anxiety, when in reality it only makes them more anxious. Always answer their questions in a positive way and reiterate that school will be fun. If you are anxious about school, your children will pick up on your stress.

- **It is important to remind your children that parents don't go to school.** Give your children some examples of things you will be doing when they are at school, such as going to the store to buy groceries. Also, talk about where other members of the family go during the day (to work or school).
- **If English is not generally spoken at home, now is a good time to start.** Having their home language is very important, but your children will feel more comfortable at school if they hear you using the language their teacher uses.
- **The big day finally arrives.** When dropping your children off at school, always walk them into class; do not carry them. Get your children seated and involved in an activity, and then leave with a smile. It will make their day go smoother. Staying doesn't make it easier for children: the longer you stay, the longer they think you will stay. It also gives children the message that you don't feel they are safe. Remind your children the teacher will take good care of them and that you will return soon.

It generally takes about three weeks for children to get comfortable with the new environment and new teachers. Remember, separation anxiety is very normal and most children soon ease into the new schedule.

At the beginning of the school year, you'll wonder how to fill all your newfound free time. By winter break, you'll wonder why preschool is so short! As we all know, the childhood years fly by too fast. Enjoy it because before you know it, you'll be applying to colleges! ♥





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# BACK TO SCHOOL

## When Your Twins Head off to KINDERGARTEN

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof



As a parent of twins, you've had your share of really big milestones from the first time your double bundle slept through the entire night to the day they both were fully potty-trained. Yet if your twins turned five this past year, in just a few weeks you'll be passing the biggest milestone of all—the first day of kindergarten.

Regardless if your twins are identical or fraternal, boys or girls, and tightly bonded or fiercely independent, the first day of school is an exciting time but for many twins, it can be an anxious one, too. "Twins are accustomed to spending a lot of time with each other," explained Susan Heim, author of *Its Twins! Parent-to-Parent Advice from Infancy*

*Through Adolescence*, and the mother of four sons including four-year-old fraternal twin boys. "Since they've always had an instant play mate, they may not be skilled in learning how to make new friends or encouraging other children to play with them." Whether they'll be sharing a classroom or not, Heim says, some twins may need time and a bit of guidance in learning to seek out new friendships. If your twins are socially shy, speak with their teacher prior to the first day of school. "When a teacher is made aware, she'll have more understanding when the child is reluctant at first to play with other children or seems sad and distracted," she added.

Stephanie Faulkner took her five-year-old fraternal twin sons past their new school frequently the summer before they started kindergarten. “We talked it up quite a bit about how they were big boys going to a big kid school. We also had an orientation at the school the week before classes started where they met their teacher, took a bus ride, and toured their school,” explained the Hazlet, N.J. mom. Susan Heim suggests even role-playing “school” with your twins, especially if they’ve never attended preschool. “Show them how to sit when asked, raise their hand when asked a question, and form a line when leaving the classroom,” she said. “Make it a fun game, and they’ll look forward to going to kindergarten.”

Still, many parents think twins actually have a social advantage over single-born children when it comes to transitioning to kindergarten. “Since Taylor and Jackson are twins, they have this level of confidence that lets them jump right into new situations,” noted Heather Hopkins of her five-year-old boy-girl twins. The Scotch Plains, N.J. mom thinks even though her twins will be in separate classrooms this fall, they’ll be less scared since they’re making the adjustment together. Pamela Damico of Export, PA and mother to six-year-old boy-girl twins, Anna and Anthony, agrees. “Once that first day of school came last year, they both got on the bus and had a good day at school. It was harder for me to see them get on the bus than it was for them,” she recalled.

## IN THE SAME CLASSROOM

If your twins are sharing the same classroom this fall, it’s important for everyone from the students to the teacher to be able to tell them apart. Although her sons look nothing alike, Stephanie Faulkner deliberately dresses her boys in contrasting outfits every day to avoid confusion. “I make sure they have completely different colored and/or patterned shirts and pants on,” she said. “So if one wears blue jeans, the other wears khaki or black pants.” The idea is to simply make your twins stand out as individuals helping to avoid other classmates from fusing them together. If your identical twins are open to the idea, have them get different haircuts. Different accessories help too, from backpacks and sneakers to hair ribbons and jewelry. And when it’s time to get down to work, ask your twins’ teacher to place them at separate tables in the classroom and pair your twins with a variety of children throughout the day so that they can socially expand their

circle of friends. At home, help them to work more independently by giving each separate chores—have one fold laundry while the other sets the table, for instance.

Most teachers, however, understand the dual role of twins. “We were really very lucky to have gotten such a great teacher that took the time to treat them as individuals but also appreciate their twin connection,” noted Pamela Damico, Anna and Anthony’s kindergarten teacher.

## IN SEPARATE CLASSROOMS

For those twins heading off to different classrooms, the adjustment can be difficult for tightly bonded twins. One way to help your twins during these last few weeks of summer is to set up a few separate play dates so that your twins can get their social feet wet solo. Or have each twin take turns spending the night at Grandma’s house so he or she can get used to being without a co-twin. “I’ve really not seen twins have difficulty being separated but if I did I would treat the twin like any other child,” said Jodi Fitzgibbons, a veteran kindergarten teacher in Glendale, CA and a fraternal twin herself. “Like with most children I would let her know when she could see her twin, mom, or whomever. I find that if you acknowledge that they miss their twin or mom and then move on to an activity, they’ll transition fairly quickly.” Furthermore, children take their cues from their parents. If you’re feeling anxious about their impending separation, so will your twins. Instead, put a positive spin on everything. Explain that they’ll have twice the new friends and lots to talk about when they meet up at recess, lunch and finally, when school lets out for the day. If they see you excited it’s sure to rub off on them.

## HANDLING THE CHAOS

During those first few weeks of school, parents of twins are bombarded with twice the amount of classroom chaos. To keep things organized, don’t forget to color code! Just like when they were babies and you color coded everything from pacifiers and sippy cups to tooth brushes and “blankies,” the system works equally as well for school backpacks and notebooks, pencil boxes and lunch sacks. “If your twins are in different classrooms, it’s more difficult for you to keep track of their assignments, class trips, and teacher requests,” Heim said. “Teach your children to empty their backpacks as soon as they get home to give you any announcements or

papers distributed by the teacher.” Heim even suggests keeping a color-coded calendar of events for each child. And what about their nightly homework assignments? Should you let them work together? Fitzgibbons advises parents to let their twins work independently, in separate locations. “I need to see how each child can complete the work on his or her own,” she said. “It’s also very valuable for the parent to see if one child struggles with a certain type of assignment.” Besides, Heim adds, if they sit together at the kitchen table they can easily distract one another or copy from each other. “Even if they have different homework, they tend to interrupt each other with questions and comments about their day,” she said.

Many parents feel that separate work spaces at home are mandatory. “If I don’t separate them, my daughter has more of a tendency to try to answer things for her brother,” said Pamela Damico. For instance, after her son was put into a supplemental reading class at school, he would bring home a special book every night to read out loud with his mom. “I had to explain to my daughter that even though she could listen to the story she was not allowed to read along with us.” Apparently Anna didn’t like that arrangement. “She would try to whisper the words to her brother instead of him figuring them out on his own,” Damico said. Stephanie Faulkner can feel Damico’s pain. Faulkner’s sons used to do their work together but when one son would always try to help the other, she quickly put a stop to it by separating the two during homework time. “I also felt I could do a better job working with them if I only had to work with one son at a time,” she said.

## SCHOOL IS NOW IN SESSION

Big changes are coming down the pike. Your twins are growing up fast and learning to do more and more for themselves. Celebrate this big milestone twin style with a double scoop of ice cream! Both you and your twins deserve it. ♥

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*Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including fraternal twins and singleton. She’s also the author of Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples and Double Duty: The Parents’ Guide to Raising Twins, both available from the TWINS Parenting Bookshelf. Christina’s website is [www.talk-about-twins.com](http://www.talk-about-twins.com).*

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*by Steven Jeffries*

# Tips to Help Your Twins Prepare for **Separation in School**

There will probably come a time when your twins will no longer be in the same classroom together at school. This may occur when they first enter the school system, or later on. As an elementary teacher, however, and as a parent of twins, I firmly believe that the earlier it happens the easier it will be. This is not to suggest that twins should be immediately separated, as I am a firm believer of advocating for your child or children's needs within the education system. But it is wise to remember that kids are naturally resilient, and even more so the younger that they are.

My wife Lisa and I are going through the school classroom separation with our six year old boy and girl twins, Joshua and Abigail, and this is really the genesis of this article. To bring a context to the situation, our only two children have been together essentially since birth. They started out together in the womb and as babies in the same room. They have been in day care together since seventeen months of age. In our home province of Ontario, kindergarten starts at age four and lasts two years. We requested that they be together for kindergarten and it was granted, and we had every intention of separating our girl and boy for grade one. However, we were moving schools and so we again requested one more year for them to stay together. Their kindergarten teacher told us that our son and daughter were completely independent of each other in the classroom, but enjoyed each other's comfort at times. Due to circumstances beyond the new school's control, we were informed by the principal that our wishes could, unfortunately, not be accommodated, and so it became time to prepare our children for classroom separation.

## COMFORTING YOUR TWINS

The main thing that a parent wants to accomplish in this situation is to provide a comfort level for the kids in their new school environment. You probably have past experiences to draw upon such as moving your twins into separate bedrooms, sending them to individual programs or even birthday parties. Reminding each one of his or her past positive steps in this regard will make the transition easier. All of the above examples applied to our children, and we have tried to comfort them by recalling these experiences positively. On the other hand, try not to make too big a deal of the change in their classroom situation, because if you don't (at least on the outside) they probably won't either.

But what if your twins are just starting school, or like our situation, are going to a new school? A visit to the school is definitely a helpful experience. In fact, when I moved schools as a child, and was very nervous about going, a visit prior to the school year beginning put me at ease. It did the same for our son and daughter too. Once the principal advised us that our twins were going to be separated, we requested a tour of the school.

She arranged for the Vice-Principal to give Lisa, Joshua, and Abigail a tour, along with some other families that also would be new to the school in September. Upon receiving the news from the principal, we had asked that, if at all possible, our son and daughter be in classrooms next door or at least in the same "pod" as each

other. This request was granted immediately, and these classrooms were revealed to Abigail and Joshua during the tour. However, neither my wife nor I had told our children yet that they wouldn't be together in September. Did this faze them? Not really. Right after the tour my wife also took them for a brief visit to the school's before and after care rooms, and I reminded them later that for about an hour before and after school, along with recesses and at lunch, they would still be able to see each other.

## CAMP AS A TRIAL SEPARATION

As I wrote this, our twins were enjoying their first time at a day camp, and were in separate groups. At summer camps, most cabin groups are single sex, unless the children are about four or five years of age or under. So this means that boy / girl twins will likely be separated. But there are other reasons that your twins might be separated, even if they are the same sex. There are usually more cabin groups than classrooms in a school, because the numbers in each group are smaller. This provides parents with the opportunity to request that their siblings be together, or in separate groups. And camps, usually wanting to please parents, are often happy to cater to your request.

Another way of separating your twins at summer camp, as a means of testing the waters, is to either send them to different programs at a specialty, community centre, or city camp, or even to different camps altogether. Later in the summer, Abigail will be attending a dance camp, and Joshua will be going to a sports camp. I am actually glad this is happening after this experience, because at least in their current situation, they travel together on the bus, and see each other at swimming and a few other times during the day. But once they are used to the majority of time being spent away from each other, the totally exclusive experience will be easier for them. But for some sets of twins, this may actually be the preferable option.

It is important to remember than any opportunity to have the kids do individual programs, activities, or sports is a great start to eventual separation. So, if you are reading this and thinking that my twins are too young for school so it does not apply to me, you might want to think again. Just as a child can become overly clingy to a parent, the same can happen with a twin sibling, too. The earlier you begin to try some separation situations, the easier it will be when a major one, such as when the school classroom issue comes along. The two things that are probably key to keep in mind when the separation of your twins is going to occur, are to make sure they are comfortable with the new situation, and to accentuate the positive. School is about learning and new experiences, and this will just be another important example of these two things. ♥

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**Steven Jeffries** is an elementary teacher and writer. He resides near Toronto, Ontario with his wife Lisa, the family photographer, and their six year old twins. You can read more on his blog at [www.twiceblessedguidetotwins.com](http://www.twiceblessedguidetotwins.com) or in his new book *Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins*.

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# August is National Breastfeeding Month!

## Calling ALL Multiple Birth Educators & ALL Multiple Birth Breastfeeding Educators in the US!

If you are an educator and work with expectant mothers of twins/multiples or with mothers breastfeeding twins/multiples you will want to take advantage of this very special offering! The manufacturer of the "My Brest Friend Twin Plus Pillow" wants to give you FREE products to use in your classroom!

All you have to do is contact them with your name, company, email address, phone number and how many new or expectant mothers of multiples you see each month and the first 100 educators that share their information will receive a FREE "My Brest Friend Twin Plus Pillow" to use and demonstrate in your groups or classes...it's that easy! If you are interested please email your contact information to: Zenoff Products: [pmacomber@zenoffprod.com](mailto:pmacomber@zenoffprod.com) with that information. Learn more by visiting [www.mybrestfriend.com](http://www.mybrestfriend.com).

## We recommend the following breastfeeding products for twins/multiples:

The MY BREST FRIEND  
TWIN PLUS PILLOW  
[www.mybrestfriend.com](http://www.mybrestfriend.com)



The San Diego BeBe  
Twin Nursing Pillow  
[www.doubleblessings.com](http://www.doubleblessings.com)

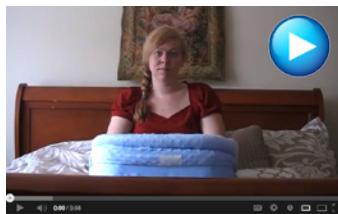


## 3 Breastfeeding Tips When Nursing in Public

Sandy Clark, inventor of the San Diego Bebe(R) Eco-Nursing Pillow and who breastfed her twins for 28 months, is a huge advocate of the health benefits, for both mom and baby, of breastfeeding. As Breastfeeding Awareness Month approaches, many moms feel they cannot leave home when they are breastfeeding due to public scrutiny. Clark wants to send the message to moms to get out and follow these three tips when breastfeeding in public.

- 1** Latch before you launch: Make sure mom and baby are both comfortable with nursing by practicing at home first. Don't head out the day after delivery to brave the public eye before doing your homework and having a routine with your baby. Once you're confident in your nursing skills, head on out! Did you know there's a national goal to increase breastfeeding for all babies as part of the Healthy People 2020 initiative? Just think, by breastfeeding your baby in public, you'll be contributing to normalizing breastfeeding for all new mothers!
- 2** Learn where it's legal: Whether or not breastfeeding in public is legal really depends on where you live. In the US, 45 states have laws that allow breastfeeding in any public location. However, 28 states consider breastfeeding in public as breaking indecency laws. Check out the list of corresponding statutes at the National Conference of State Legislature website.
- 3** Go public with pride: Focus on your baby and don't mind the onlookers. Be confident and proud of the most important decision a mother can make by offering the purest and best nutrition possible for her baby. Do it with conviction and SMILE.

Watch this video to see San Diego Bebe(R) in use:



Free of fire-retardant chemicals, San Diego Bebe(R) is also odor-free, glue-free, foam-free, lead-free and Phthalate-free. The patented design includes many mom-inspired features including a unique built-in Privacy Cover(TM) which provides discretion whenever and wherever needed. San Diego Bebe(R) is the winner of numerous industry awards including the Australian Toy Industry's 2012 Nursery Product of the Year, as well as the National Parenting Center and Creative Child(R) Top Choice Awards. San Diego Bebe(R) is available at [www.DoubleBlessings.com](http://www.DoubleBlessings.com)

## Twin Breastfeeding Help!

by Claire E. Cundiff

Have you decided to breast-feed your twins? Despite the disbelieving looks you may receive, breast-feeding two is not only possible but can be absolutely wonderful. If you've never experienced breastfeeding, much less breastfeeding twins, then read on for some words of advice that can help make your transition a little easier.

### TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS

As you begin breastfeeding you will discover that it can be rather uncomfortable. The actual nursing does not hurt (though nipple soreness can be an issue and we'll discuss that next) but as your milk comes in, engorgement can make you start to second-guess your decision. Hold on; it will get better. Meanwhile, for those sore breasts and shoulders, a homemade heating pad can do wonders. Take two athletic socks and fill them about three-quarters of the way with brown rice. Tie a strong knot in the end and toss them in the microwave. The rice retains the heat nicely, will conform to any shape and smells good to boot. Hot baths or showers can also alleviate some of the discomfort. Nipples unused to such a work out can also suffer from breast-feeding. Pure lanolin will comfort actual splits but the thing that helped me the most was fresh air and a little sunshine. Find a nice secluded spot in the sun and bask nude for a few minutes each day. Not only will it help toughen up your nipples but it will stimulate the healing of cesarean or episiotomy stitches and give you some much-needed quiet time.

### THE NURSING PAD

You could simply pile a bunch of pillows around you to support your babies and nurse; however, I would strongly recommend a nursing pad. The strain of supporting two small children seems insignificant at the moment. Consider how often you will be nursing and then add into the mix increasingly active

## Breastfeeding Benefits May Go Straight to the Heart

Researchers and doctors have long held that breastfeeding is the gold standard of infant nutrition - and now they have yet another reason why. A recent study published in *Pediatrics* found that breastfed babies had lower cholesterol as adults than formula-fed babies. These results suggest early exposure to breast milk may program fat metabolism in later life, resulting in lower blood cholesterol levels and thus a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. A significant discovery considering that 1.5 million Americans have heart attacks each year and heart disease is the number one killer of women over the age of 40.

The researchers studied more than 1,500 adolescents, and reviewed studies of cholesterol levels in infants, children, adolescents and adults, comparing those who were breastfed vs. formula-fed. The results suggest that breastfeeding is associated with different effects on cholesterol at different stages of life. Breastfeeding seems to be associated with high levels of cholesterol in infancy. Although the authors found no relation between infant feeding pattern and cholesterol in childhood and adolescence, cholesterol levels were lower in adults who had been breastfed.

(Source: American Academy of Pediatrics)

infants. You will come to appreciate a flat stable surface and your back will reap the additional benefits. The one I use—designed specifically for twins—has a belt that holds the pad snugly against me and the removable cover can be tossed in the washing machine. My only complaint is that it doesn't extend far enough in the back to support their legs so I end up piling pillows up anyway.

### NOW WE'RE NURSING!

Here are a couple of things to make nursing easier. Switch sides each time you nurse your children; one child will probably be a stronger feeder. Burp your child if you see her alternating between nursing and fussing. Keep your body relaxed while you nurse: Listen to music, read a book or better yet, talk to your children. Speak gently and calmly while you nurse.

### NURSING OUTSIDE THE HOME

Now is the time to think creatively. Most major stores that sell clothing have dressing rooms. If you ask nicely, chances are the management will allow you to use a room, preferably the handicap-accessible one, which will give you more space. If you can't find a private space but you have help with you, one can carry a child while you nurse the other. Be subtle, use a receiving blanket and none will be the wiser. If done too subtly however, a sales clerk may approach you. I was tracked by one who was certain I was shoplifting... imagine her surprise when the "stolen item" looked up at her and smiled.

Get to know your parking lots! Even before you have your children, start looking for private places you can nurse while on the road. Window sunscreens provide excellent shade for your little ones and a bit of privacy for you. We live in the southwest where shade comes at a premium so I always look for cool spots. If it's after business hours, the drive through bank can provide lots of shade and a quiet place to nurse; another handy place can be an elementary school parking lot during the summer. Be sure to pack an extra thick blanket or two for padding if you nurse in your vehicle; you would be amazed at how much room is taken by car seats and you'll need to fill the gap between them.

### BUT IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

The decision to breastfeed your twins are not always an easy one. The most important thing to realize is that breastfeeding may not be for everyone and that it's perfectly fine to bottle feed your children. What works best for you will work best for your twins. If you are stressed while you feed your children, your children will know and react accordingly. Breastfeeding twins can be a challenge. With some common sense and a little pre-planning, however, you can make your experience a good one. ♥

*Continued on page 29*



# MILK FOR TWO

IT MAY SEEM OVERWHELMING,  
BUT BREASTFEEDING TWINS  
IS BOTH POSSIBLE AND  
PLEASURABLE *by Allison Berryhill*

In the recovery room after delivery, I nursed Harrison and Stuart, first individually, then together. My husband hovered over us, adjusting pillows and babies. Like the first time on water-skis, I was shaky and exhilarated, at once amazed and insecure.

Having breastfed my other children, I wanted desperately to nurse my twins. I wondered if caring for two babies in such an absorbing way would be emotionally and physically overwhelming. Yet I was encouraged by other mothers who had breastfed multiples and were glad they did.

Admittedly nursing twins is not always a tidy business. It can be a bit drippy and at times downright awkward. A neighbor stopped by when my sons were a week old. I should have simply said we were not ready for a visit. But instead I pulled a blanket up to my chin to cover the jumble of breasts and babies. My head poked out the top like the flag on a circus tent. I attempted to make conversa-

tion, diving under the blanket every few sentences to reattach my little guys. The guest did not stay long.

Breastfeeding twins broadened my definitions of “comfortable position” and “productive afternoon.” It also taught me from the inside out that my babies and I belong to each other. Breastfeeding ensured that every day, every few hours, I folded my babies into my arms, held them against my skin and provided them with what the American Academy of Pediatrics terms optimal infant nutrition.

## GETTING STARTED

Learning to breastfeed one baby can be a challenge. Twins multiply the effort. Judy Losh, RN, IBCLC, a lactation consultant at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, reminds new mothers that the more they nurse (or pump), the more milk they will produce.

Establishing an abundant milk supply is job number one for the first weeks. Hosting visitors, planning baptisms and sending birth announcements can all wait. But delaying nursing can lead to a depleted milk supply.

A week or two into breastfeeding, just when you’re merrily on your way, milk gushing, confidence bursting, your twins may hit their first of many growth spurts. Nursing, nursing, nursing your babies tells your body to make more milk. It’s reassuring to know that your breasts will “catch up” to the increased demand within a day or two. Let the laundry pile up; get someone to bring you a plate of egg rolls, and breastfeed as frequently as possible.

## LOOKING FOR BALANCE

The early days with twins are an emotional teeter-totter. I found my every nerve ending open to my babies—their silky smell, the taste of their downy skin beneath my kisses—creating sensory overload that left me light-headed. When friends called to provide





meals, I couldn't think clearly enough to say if Monday or Tuesday night was best. I really was not prepared for such confusion and wavering self-confidence.

Formula feeding during this adjustment period looks steady and stable, while breastfeeding may appear to be one more chaotic element in a life that feels out of control. But the long-range advantages of breastfeeding must be considered when determining the "ease" of both feeding methods. According to Losh, infants who are breastfed have lower rates of hospital admissions, ear infections, diarrhea, and rashes than bottle-fed babies. And nursing twins can save \$2,000 or more in formula costs during the babies' first year.

## NIGHTTIME NURSING

Faced with the proverbial "not enough hours in the day" nighttime nursing was a mainstay of my babies' most milk-dependent months. With newborns, I reclined in a pillow-piled Lay-Z-Boy, each boy to a breast, attached for the night. I did not get long, uninterrupted hours of slumber, but I was no more sleep-deprived than during the final months of pregnancy when few positions were comfortable.

As Harrison and Stuart grew, we graduated to a queen-sized bed, where I found—surprise!—my husband. He welcomed my company enough to tolerate the fact that I brought two babies with me. I kept one tucked in with us, and the other in a crib at arm's reach, switching babies throughout the night. On our most topsy-turvy nights, my husband would lumber from bed and make his way to my recently abandoned recliner chair.

I accepted night nursing in order to maintain my milk supply, and I came to think of it as a way to accomplish two things at once: I could wake in the morning with my boys already fed.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Ideally, a new mother and her babies can settle right down to nursing. But reality may present less-than-ideal circumstances, and even the most determined mother may feel defeated by the series of obstacles a multiple birth can present.

Cesarean deliveries sometimes delay early breastfeeding opportunities and make some feeding positions uncomfortable. Premature twins especially benefit from the immunity protection of mother's milk, but are sometimes too weak to suckle at the breast. If for any reason newborns are not nursing frequently and vigorously, a mother needs to establish her milk supply with a high-quality breast pump. Electric pumps that draw milk from both breasts simultaneously are best.

Be forewarned: Pumping is not the warm, cozy experience that actual breastfeeding is. As a friend who pumped for her baby's first four weeks said, "It's like breastfeeding a piece of furniture." But pumping is a temporary bridge to keep milk flowing until babies are nursing well. And it gives the mother a direct impact on her twins' health, which can bolster her sense of purpose during this stressful time.

## IN MY EXPERIENCE

Weighing in at 5 pounds, 11 ounces and 6 pounds, Stuart and Harrison were born three weeks early—average for twins. Their delivery was uncomplicated, and neither boy had trouble learning to latch onto the breast. However, both babies were jaundiced and sleepy. I needed to wake them every few hours and coax them through feedings.

Stuart seemed to be nursing as well as Harrison, but he was not gaining weight as he neared the three-week mark. I began to panic. In the upheaval of postpartum, I agonized that Stuart's slow weight gain signaled my inability to meet the needs of twins. My husband was caught between trying to calm his increasingly anxious wife and worrying about his sons.

We needed an action plan and reassurance. My lactation consultant provided both, helping us zero in on why Stuart's weight was not picking up, while Harrison nursed with long draws and pulls—gulping milk (nutritive sucking)—Stuart just sip-sipped along, pacifying himself but not nursing effectively.

Judy Losh explained that we needed to get extra calories into Stuart to improve his strength at the breast. I began pumping after feedings, collecting the "hind-milk," which is higher in calories than the "fore-

milk" from the first minutes of nursing. (Half and half compared to 2%, you might say.) We then fed the collected milk to Stuart with a bottle.

An extra eight ounces of pumped hind-milk a day provided the growth calories Stuart needed. He grew stronger after only a few days, and we discontinued supplementing as his weight began to climb. Judy's support saw us through an episode that could have overwhelmed us.

The turmoil of the first weeks gives way to growing calm. Order and focus emerge as nursing becomes a way of life, a baby-led approach to mothering that shapes the days, eventually saving time and energy. Why walk all the way to the kitchen to prepare a substitute for something nature hid under your sweatshirt? Once nursing is well established, most mothers find it to be a relaxing, joyful part of nurturing their babies. ♥

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**Allison Berryhill** of Atlantic, Iowa, is a freelance writer and the mother of six, including twin boys born in September 1994.

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Limiting outings during the first weeks with newborn twins makes sanity-saving sense for any mother. But when you're ready to roll, the following strategies, offered by women who have breastfed twins, may help. The load is lightened with no bottles to haul, but breastfeeding mothers will want to think ahead. Nursing two babies simultaneously is not discreet.

Shocking is a more accurate term. For your own comfort, not to mention that of those around you, it may be wise to avoid situations when both babies will want to breastfeed at the same time in public. Choose excursions where you can comfortably nurse one baby or have privacy for nursing – both friends' homes and mothers' groups are safe bets. By nursing one baby when first arriving at a gathering, you can be ready for the second one when needed. This may mean walking a sleeping baby, but reduces the chance of both babies waking up hungry at the same time. Let others know what is helpful. People are usually eager to hold one baby while the other is nursing. Encourage your friends to pick up a baby without waiting for an invitation.



# IT'S TIME TO REMOVE THE IN VITRO STIGMA

Last year my wife gave birth to our wonderful twin sons, which we often like to refer to as our "science babies." Keegan and Korbin were conceived through In vitro fertilization, the process by which fertilization occurs in a petri dish prior to the fertilized egg, or eggs in our case, are placed back into the mother's uterus.

While In vitro has become a very common practice, particularly for women with age based fertility challenges, it's fascinating the

extent to which it still apparently remains taboo in our culture. What's particularly interesting, however, is the apparent source of such stigma. Based on the experiences my wife and I have had in the months leading up to and following IVF, it hasn't been those without direct IVF experience that seem reticent to acknowledge it, but rather those who have gone through it themselves, often successfully.

As I'm sure many readers here are well aware of, parents of twins are often asked by strangers whether twins run in the family. While often times it would seem easier just to say "yes," I am typically eager to point out jokingly that ours are "twins through chemistry." I have no qualms or reservations about providing a genuinely interested listener with our IVF story, and usually find that the person leaves the conversation with insights and perspectives relevant to their own friends and loved ones who have gone through the IVF process, but have perhaps been reluctant to share the details.

Being a parent of twins means that you naturally come in contact with other parents of multiples, be it through social media or networking sites, or just those you encounter while pushing your stroller. These meetings often result in relationships built upon the type of shared struggle and empathy parents of twins often have for one another. What I've noticed through these interactions, however, is that few who conceived their twins through IVF or other forms of reproductive therapy are willing to divulge this information, at least initially. In fact, many have gone as far as to be misleading about their twins' conception, before later admitting to having utilized fertility assistance in some capacity.

Following a sufficient number of experiences such as this, I began to question my own apparent brazenness at telling our IVF story. Was I being too open in admitting to something that perhaps I should have held a little closer to my chest? Was my willingness to share our experience so openly secretly embarrassing to my wife, who perhaps hid latent feelings of embarrassment at us being unable to conceive naturally? I'll admit to being a man with a verbal filter of limited functionality, which led me to fear the thought that I had been sharing information that was perhaps too personal to warrant sharing.

My fears related to this were alleviated, fortunately, after speaking with my wife who, while generally more conservative about sharing personal details, found no harm in using our experience to educate others. There was nothing to be ashamed about in requiring IVF for reproduction. We had even looked into adoption prior to making the decision to try IVF, until discovering that this was an even more time consuming route that spared none of the emotional or financial challenges associated with IVF. We had even tried natural and holistic approaches to reproduction, exhausting all options from me giving up cycling, to my wife utilizing herbs and acupuncture to try and overcome our individual challenges.

Ours was just a matter of statistical unlikelihood. Continuing to try naturally would have been like purchasing lottery tickets in lieu of saving for retirement.

After speaking with my wife, I found that my fear morphed into a sense of being offended. If there wasn't anything inherently wrong about a childless couple utilizing fertility services to begin a managed process of expanding their family, then why would our friends lie about having done so? Why would the people who had gained the most through IVF be the least likely to acknowledge it?

Unfortunately, the answer to this question isn't entirely clear. Perhaps it's a fear of judgment or reprisal from those who might

hold the process in contempt. Maybe it's a feeling of inadequacy in acknowledging that natural fertilization just wasn't in the cards for them. It certainly makes sense that few couples would want to discuss this path early in the process, particularly since In vitro has a roughly 50% success rate, and can take a tremendously emotional toll on couples who invest so heavily in it, both personally and financially, only to have it not work. In fact, I would certainly sympathize with any couple who had tried IVF without success and was reluctant to share that experience. That those who have had IVF experiences with positive outcomes have been so quick to deny having utilized these services seems sad and unfortunate, however.

As is stands, there is still a tremendous information gap with respect to what we know about infertility in this country, particularly for the large swath of women in this country who are directly impacted by it. My wife and I value every opportunity to share our story with others, even the more discouraging and difficult parts of it, in the hopes that it might provide another woman or couple with sufficient information to make their own family planning decisions. The reluctance of couples to directly share their accounts exacerbates this information gap, and leaves many in the dark with regards to where to start looking for information, what questions to ask, and what to expect. Even worse, without couples or mothers willing to provide their firsthand accounts to those considering IVF, many will be limited to information provided by clinics and service providers, which can often come off as cold, calculated and lacking the requisite emotional context.

While the decision to utilize fertility services as an aid to conception is a highly personal one between a woman, her partner, and their doctor, I hope that more individuals will share their experiences in an effort to close an information gap that really has no reason to persist. Doing so will require that we remove whatever stigmas may still exist in the world with respect to these procedures and processes.

We certainly cannot accomplish this, however, until those of us who have experienced IVF and related treatments begin to open up and share our stories. The world will not begin to fully respect physician assisted fertility procedures as a means of conception until we ourselves begin to respect our own decisions and their outcomes.

Let's remove this self-inflicted shame and stigma of having conceived, or having attempted to conceive through artificial means, and create an environment of openness and acceptance that fosters knowledge and compassion, not confusion and guilt. IVF can add substantial emotional challenges on top of an already emotionally draining set of circumstances. Only through our willingness to actively provide empathy and shared experiences to others engaging in these challenges will we truly begin to see change in how the world perceives IVF, and in how women and couples navigate these experiences in the future. ♥

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**Kenneth L. Strickland** is a market research consultant from St. Petersburg, Florida and a father of twin one-year old boys.

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# TWIN SISTERS

## *Two Closets and*

# Two Different Scales

Staff Writer



Growing up in a large family was a wonderful experience for Callie and Courtney Ellis. But being twins and having each other to depend on through good and bad situations was the best for the Ellis twins. As they say themselves, they were the team front against the rest of the clan, and they shared everything, except a closet. Callie and Courtney didn't share their clothes like many twin girls do because they didn't want to, but because they could not. Despite being twins Callie and Courtney have

never been the same dress size. As Callie tells it, she was singled out in the DNA lottery and won the "heavy weight" genes.

"We played the same sports, ate the same food and were raised in exactly the same way," reminisces Callie. "I was just always the tubby one, at least 25-30lbs heavier than my twin, while she was the taller one - by one inch."

Like many California children, Callie and Courtney had a very active childhood. The girls did it all. They danced ballet and tap, played tennis, basketball and loved all watersports. There was never any comparison, yet Callie heard it loud and clear when she was the one that was always told to eat less because of her weight. As the twins entered Junior High, Callie began packing on the weight and by the time they were in high school Callie was vehemently teased for her weight. Courtney wasn't any help.

"I tend to be quieter, to not talk about things and she is the more outgoing one," adds Callie. "Like all sisters, we would fight and I would shut down, whereas she would throw my weight in my face to upset me. It was really just a sibling thing but I was hurt by it at the time."

The fights never lasted long but to Callie her weight issues would continue to be a struggle.

"I have tried everything possible to lose weight, fad diets, and regular exercise and even traveled out of the US to medical clinics that promised help, but I still couldn't keep the weight off and the rebounds began to get even worse," said Callie.

After hearing a coworker mention she was having weight loss surgery, Callie decided to take the momentous step towards a healthier

life and asked if she could meet with the weight loss surgeon, too.

When Callie met with Beverly Hills weight loss surgeon Dr. Michael Feiz, it was like a light was switched on. She saw the facts as Dr. Feiz explained to her and the ramifications of her massive weight gain. Callie was becoming a victim of her own habits and with the increasing weight gain she was rapidly on the way to facing a future filled with life threatening diabetes, heart disease and other obesity related medical conditions.

It was so clear to Callie now. Her weight issues needed medical intervention.

Of course, she called Courtney. And in Courtney's typical twin sister fashion said, "Why have you waited so long to do this?"

"It wasn't until this moment that Courtney realized that my being so overweight wasn't necessarily a choice, but something that was a very real struggle for me," stated Callie. "Since my decision to have the surgery Courtney has become my biggest weight loss advocate and, although we live far away from each other, she has helped my every step of the way from a distance."

Callie chose to undergo the gastric sleeve procedure with Beverly Hills, Board Certified Bariatric Surgeon Dr. Michael Feiz who is a well-known expert in the weight loss surgery community, [www.drfeiz.com](http://www.drfeiz.com).

"It was surreal being with Dr. Feiz since I never usually go and see doctors. But it just felt right," adds Callie. "His practice managers made it so easy for me and for the first time I felt like the doctor and his staff saw me, Callie the person, and not just my weight."

Bariatric weight loss surgery has dramatically increased in popularity in the last decade due to rising obesity rates and the battle to combat the increased risks of developing high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and bone and joint pain. The Gastric Sleeve surgery decreases the size of the stomach, reduces food intake and can enable the patient to lose a significant amount of weight. The final result for a patient is often an improved physical and emotional quality of life and even a possible increase in life expectancy.


With only a single excision, Dr. Feiz surgically reduced the size of Callie's stomach to 25% its original size and created the Sleeve allowing for better regulation of food intake. The Sleeve also helps stop production of Ghrelin, the hunger stimulating hormone.

Dr. Feiz notes "Patients like Callie come to see me for weight loss surgeries because they know that it may save their lives and reverse significant health issues caused by their weight condition. They have often endured many years of discrimination because of their weight and are making a dramatic and brave decision to change their life."

Callie had her surgery in May of 2013 and to date has lost 4 dress and pant sizes and a dramatic 34 pounds in just two months.

"Before the surgery, I was a size 20 and now just two months later, I am a size 16," updates Callie. "I haven't been this size since high school."

Courtney is now living in Texas and has yet to see the new Callie.

"We talk all the time but I don't want her to see me yet," states Callie. "I am waiting for the big reveal this August when I fly out to see Courtney in Dallas. I cannot wait to show the new slim and trim twin. Twin time will never be the same again!" 

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**Dr. Michael Feiz, M.D., FACS** graduated with Highest Honors from UCLA where he completed a Bachelors of Science degree in Neuroscience and simultaneously conducted research towards a Masters thesis in Biochemistry. Dr. Feiz received his Medical Degree from New York Medical College, with Honors. He completed his internship and residency in Surgery at the world famous Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center. He continued subspecialty Fellowship training at Cedars Sinai Medical Center where he received specialized training in Bariatric and Minimally Invasive Surgery. He is an active Member of the American Society for Bariatric Surgeons, American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association and the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES). He is fluent in Spanish and Farsi. For more information [www.drfeiz.com](http://www.drfeiz.com).

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*Breast-feeding help continued from page 23*

## Feeding the Masses

Your breast milk has nutrients designed especially for your preemie multiples and antibodies that help fight infection. But breastfeeding isn't easy: Your babies may have weak sucks, they may tire easily and your milk supply may be low because of the stress of caring for more than one infant. Many mothers pump and store their milk, then begin nursing when their babies are developmentally ready.

To successfully nurse, you need resources and support. A lactation consultant, feeding specialist or a local breastfeeding support group can help. Remember, any amount of breastmilk you provide your babies is beneficial.

By breast or bottle, your babies will probably need frequent meals for good growth and chances are they won't always want to eat at the same time (do ask your hospital to try to get them on a regular eating and sleep schedule before homecoming). Understandably, you may feel overwhelmed and exhausted. "This is a time when you really have to nurture yourself," Malmstrom says. Get plenty of rest, eat well, and take vitamins.

## Signs of Correct Nursing

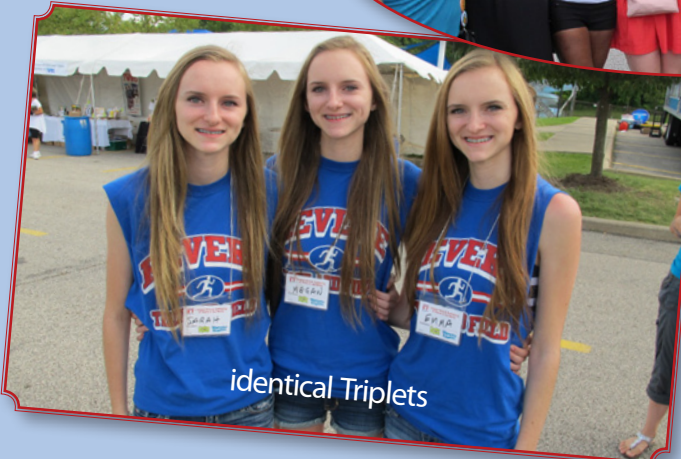
- Your baby's mouth is open wide with lips curled out.
- His chin and nose are resting against the breast.
- He has taken as much of the areola as possible in his mouth.
- He is suckling rhythmically and deeply, in short bursts separated by pauses.
- You can hear him swallowing regularly.
- Your nipple is comfortable after the first few suckles.

## Signs of Incorrect Nursing

- Your baby's head is not in line with his body.
- He is sucking on the nipple only, instead of suckling on the areola with the nipple far back in his mouth.
- He is sucking in a light, quick, fluttery manner rather than taking deep, regular suckles.
- His cheeks are puckered inward or you hear clicking noises. You don't hear him swallow regularly after your milk production has increased.

(Source: American Academy of Pediatrics)

Submitted by Bill Cody, Publisher



# TWINS Magazine Publishers Attend this year's annual **Twins Days Festival** in Twinsburg, Ohio!

(Twins Days 2013 - Twinsburg, Ohio) For the 37th year in a row twins and their families and friends descend on Twinsburg, Ohio for fun and camaraderie. This year was no exception. 1999 sets of twins were formally registered and a reported total of approximately 35,000 people walked through the gates during the weekend. Twins Magazine was there to see the spectacle. We sponsored the event by manning a booth along with the booths of TTTS Foun-



ation founder Mary Staman-Forsythe and her family, Twins City BBQ's Joe Palinkas, Author Natasha D'Anna and others.

When I say "we" I mean Bill and Gina Cody the publishers of the magazine. We did our "show booth" best representing the magazine with a selection of books from our shop, the ability to set up new subscribers on the spot and other selected gifts. We were pleased with the results and of course had many delightful conversations with twins and their families.

The weekend began with the annual parade which filled the streets with participants and onlookers. The crowd then calmly filled the fairgrounds for a day of contests, entertainment and browsing of vendor booths. More predominant though were happy reunions and new meetings of twins from around the country. Many reported having come to the festival for decades in a row. We were happy to be a part of the festivities. Our twin girls had a chance to visit and become one of the registered celebrants.

It is amazing how the whole town embraces twins - having changed its name to Twinsburg at the insistence of the the Wilcox Twins in 1819. Even the town water tower has "Home of Twins Days" painted on it. With the exception of a handful of staff people, the whole event is manned by local volunteers - what a nice gesture from the community. We remarked between us that the whole event was VERY well run.

Day two featured more entertainment, food offerings and just plain fun. Each day there was a group photo taken from high up in a bucket truck. The truck was needed to capture the hillside where hundreds of twins gathered to be part of the shot. Even the photographers were twins themselves. It was a sea of bright faces and smiles.

We had a great time sharing our experiences with all the others that have done the same. It is a unique experience that you have to have lived through to appreciate. We saw twins, and multiples up to quads, holding hands, laughing, sporting similar attire and even outlandish costumes. We felt a genuine bond with the families who were pushing double strollers with proud looks on their faces. We felt the connection when watching the festival's oldest twins contest winners accept their award - 99 years young. We fondly remembered the feelings when the youngest twins in attendance accepted their award - just over 4 weeks old. What a weekend. We will be back! ♥





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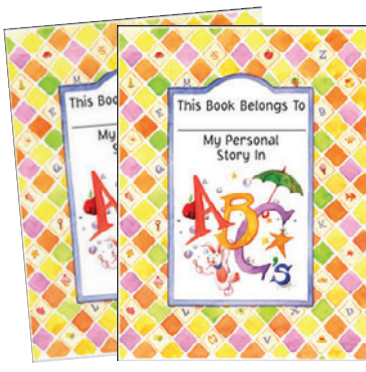
Click on any of these products to learn more!



Twins Growth Chart

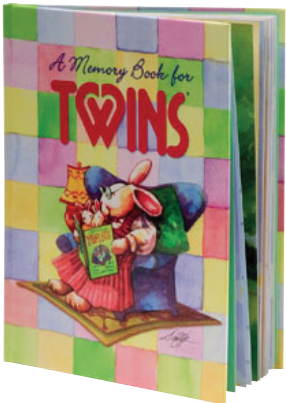


A Very Special Twin Story



My Personal Story in ABCs

Lifetime Memory Books



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Boy / Boy Twin Story Packet

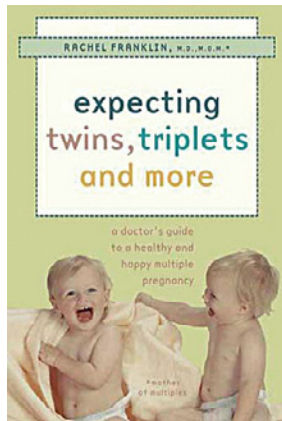
Girl / Girl Twin Story Packet



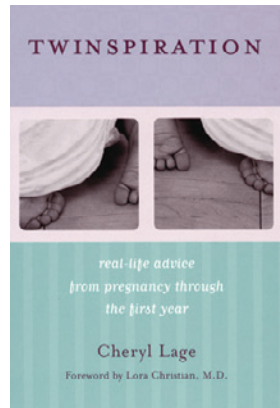
Boy / Girl Twin Story Packet



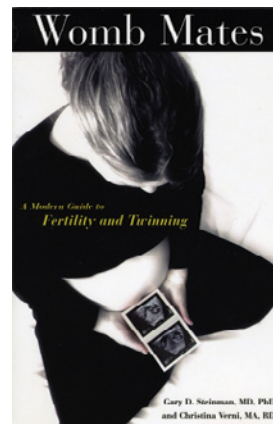
# CHECK OUT OUR HUGE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR PARENTS & KIDS...



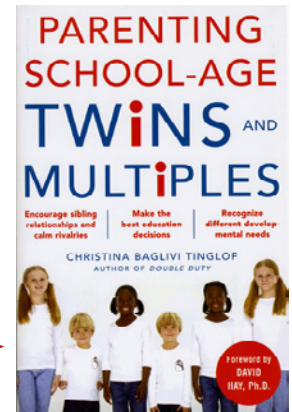
**Expecting Twins, Triplets and More**



**Twinspiration**



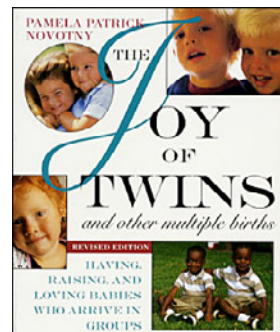
**Womb Mates**



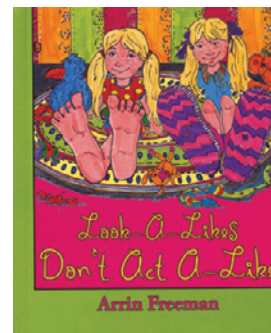
**Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples**



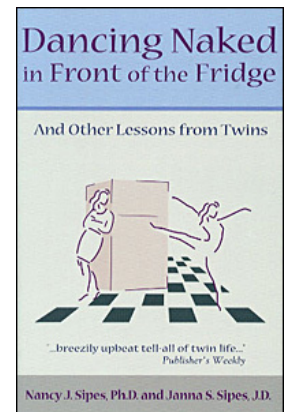
**Twin Tales**



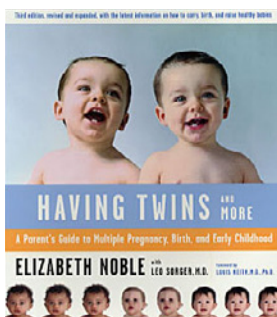
**The Joy of Twins and Other Multiple Births**



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



**Dancing Naked in Front of the Fridge**



**Having Twins and More**



**Mothering Multiples**



**Two Times the Fun**

**Bedtime Safari**



# DOUBLE TAKES



**1**

Dominick & Dean  
Age 7-months –FR  
Lafayette, IN



**2**

Lily & Nicolas  
Age 2 –FR  
Grand Terrace, CA



**3**

Hailey & Nataley  
Age: 9-months –FR  
Cape Coral, Florida



**4**

Noah & Logan  
Age 8-months-ID  
Jupiter Florida



**5**

Ameil & Amiyah  
Age 4-months –FR  
East Orange, NJ



**6**

Kate & Claire • Age 6-ID  
Allie & Amelia • Age 2 –FR  
Wilmington, NC

JULY/AUGUST 2013



7

Stuart & Benjamin  
Age 6-ID  
Kennesaw, GA



8

Zachariah Michael & Grace Emily  
Age 9-months-FR  
Lakewood, Colorado



9

Isabella & Victoria  
Age 2 1/2-FR  
Brooklyn, NY



10

Steven & Jerry  
Age 4-ID  
Elk Grove, CA



11

Hannah & Mason  
Age 16-months-FR  
Charlotte, North Carolina



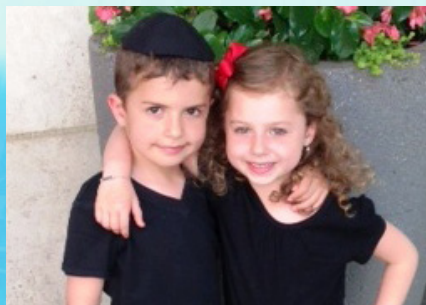
12

Hope & Faith  
Age 6-FR  
Manning, South Carolina



13

Gavin & Jake  
Age 19-months-FR  
Washington, D.C.



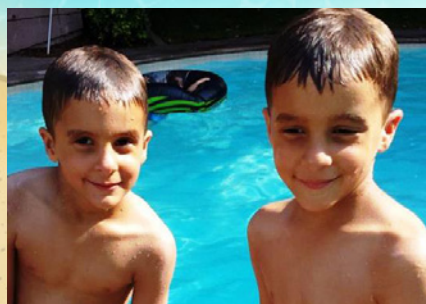
14

Jacqueline & Samuel  
Age 5-FR  
Woodmere, NY



15

Akynzie & Addisyn  
Age: 12 months-ID  
North Olmsted, Ohio



16

Ethan & Evan  
Age 6-ID  
Pismo Beach, CA



17

Adam & Sarah  
Age 7-FR  
Chugiak, Alaska



18

Olivia & Zoey  
Age 5-months-FR  
Bayonne, NJ

# DOUBLE TAKES



**19** Madden & Grayson  
Age 10-months-ID  
Chesapeake, VA



**20** Hannah & Callan  
Age 4-FR  
Vancouver, WA



**21** Nivedita & Niharika  
Age 5-ID  
Toronto, Canada



**22** Brant & Bryce  
Age 5-ID  
Teague, Texas



**23** Rachael & Rebecca • Age 5-ID  
Simeon & Silas • Age 3-ID  
Arkona, Ontario



**24** Mya & Mea  
Age 5-ID  
Sweetwater, Texas



**25** George & Anthony  
Age 3 1/2-ID  
Ansonia, Connecticut



**26** Ben & Emma  
Age 5-FR  
Clinton, MS



**27** Jordyn & Kaiden  
Age ?-ID  
Lincoln, New Brunswick, Canada



**28** Christian & Alexander  
Age 3 1/2-ID  
Akron, Ohio



**29** Kaitlin & Steven • Age 5-FR  
Kayla & Luke • Age 1-FR  
Woodsfield, Ohio



**30** Allison & Emmaline  
Age 5-months-FR  
Land O Lakes, FL.



# Annie Zurn's Almost Typical Saturday Morning

by Stephanie Zurn



Saturday started out as a normal day for Annie, the female half of my five-year-old boy/girl twins. She came into my room around 7 am, her normal wake up time, and greeted her father and me in the usual way, "Can I play the iPad?"

"Good morning Annie," I replied, hoping to encourage a return greeting. It failed. "iPad," she grunted back, this time abandoning the formality of even asking the question. This was clearly going nowhere. "Go for it."

Annie, officially Annabelle Albritton Zurn, Albritton being my maiden name, has two favorite things in life: the iPad is the first, and the second is our kitty, Holly, who for some reason Annie has renamed Cuckoo Butt. On Saturday morning Cuckoo Butt was not in her usual place at the foot of my bed, so Annie, after retrieving the iPad, quickly made her way downstairs to locate her.

Securing both the iPad and Holly is Annie's objective each morning. I swear she wakes up mission-ready; no yawning, no stretching - she just pops up and starts the campaign. Perhaps it helps to understand that Annie has an equally cunning archenemy, her twin Robbie. While Robbie neither enjoys the iPad nor Cuckoo Butt as much as Annie, he does enjoy the taste of victory when he beats her to the prize, he enjoys seeing his sister's furrowed brow and listening to her growl his name, "Ugh, Robbieeeeeee."

Annie hasn't learned yet that if she would just act like she didn't care, he would lose interest soon and move on to something else - like coloring on my walls or flooding the bathroom.

A few weeks ago my husband commented that we might solve the problem if we made a rule that each kid either gets the cat or the iPad, and that they had to alternate days for who has which. It seemed like a great idea so we implemented it. Problem not solved. Robbie who, again, doesn't really care about either the cat or the iPad lost interest when it no longer meant making his sister mad, and decided only to realize his turn whenever he became bored with his mischief and saw that his sister was contently playing with both the iPad and Cuckoo Butt.

I've since given up on taking turns and we have returned again to the lawlessness of the early bird gets the worm. And Annie is more determined than ever.

The humor in this routine is not lost on me. I remember my exact thoughts when I found out that my twins were going to be a girl and a boy, good, there won't be any competition. How very wrong I was. I know there are meek twins out there who look out for their built-in best friend of a sibling, but that is not what is happening in my house. There's

nothing meek about either of my twins, and there's rarely anything that resembles friendship.

But Saturday I was surprised.

Although Annie had managed to beat Robbie to both the iPad and the cat, Saturday was not going well for her. Recently she has begun playing a little game she calls giving Cuckoo Butt a makeover. This pastime is generally quite tame; it usually involves something as simple as swapping the cat's collar for one of Annie's hand-made wooden bead bracelets - or if it's a special day, the sparkly store-bought pink one - and a hairstyle. On Saturday, though, she decided Holly needed a little more, perhaps a little haircut.

As I sat reading my morning paper and gulping down the first of the many cups of coffee required to make it through the day with five-year-old twins, Annie bolted past me, wailing. I followed, and tried to procure from this inconsolable child an explanation of what the matter might be. She wasn't talking.

I went after Robbie next, expecting him to be the cause of this great anguish, "What did you do to Annie?" "Nothing."

"Well then why is she crying like that?"

He hesitated. "Okay, I'll tell you only if you promise not to put Annie in timeout."

Who are you, and what have you done with my child, a favored expression of surprised mommies everywhere immediately popped into my head.

"You don't want me to put Annie in timeout?" "No."

He lead me to the bathroom where a relatively calm Holly sat shaking her head, drops of blood spilling from her ear, flying through the air, covering her fur, my floor, the nearby wall.

I picked her up and applied pressure to the wound. She remained calm the entire time - like it was just another day. And really it was.

My husband and I laugh all the time as Annie drags Holly around the house, squeezing her a little too tight, banging her into furniture, all while Holly just takes the abuse. We got Holly so young my husband swears she thinks Annie is her mommy. She must, at least, think this is the way life with humans is supposed to be.

This though was swirling around my mind as Holly kept her composure while I dressed the wound. Well, I guess it's not that surprising.

Nothing, of course, like the fact that Robbie just stood up for his sister. What? He must have known that this was not the time for his antics, that his sister, who was so visibly upset about hurting her beloved Cuckoo Butt, really needed a friend.

As I started to think about the weight of this small act, Robbie came down the stairs, his red, puffy-faced sister following behind.

"See I told you she's not bleeding anymore, Annie. And you don't have to go to timeout, does she Mom?"

"No she doesn't."

A changed Annie rushed over, jerked the bandaged Cuckoo Butt from my arms and looked around the room for a moment. I knew the event had already been forgotten the moment the word left her mouth.

"iPad?" ♥

**Stephanie Zurn** is a writer, photographer and sometimes overly ambitious mother of three - including a set of boy/girl twins. She lives in Washington State with her husband, kids and a cat named Holly.

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