

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINS™

30th Anniversary

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**TOGETHER OR
SEPARATE:
THE GREAT
CLASSROOM DEBATE!**



**Easy Food for
Infant Twins**

July/August 2014

**Avoiding the
Boredom
Trap**

**10 Tips for
Building
Self-Esteem**

**Do Double
the kids =
Double the
Divorce Rate?**

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On the Cover:



Meet 3-year-old fraternal twins, Aidan and Evan from Howell, Michigan. Proud mom Carly says the boys have an amazing love and bond for each other which they have been blessed to have witnessed since birth and continues to grow and get stronger everyday! They truly are best friends!! Aidan on the left is such a caring boy! He's independent, loves cars and trucks and is his brother's biggest fan! Evan on the right has the biggest heart; he loves to greet all the neighbors and people passing by. He is our biggest helper and loves music and painting!

Cover Photography taken by: Meg Marhofer Shone
 Foto Photography, www.shonefoto.com.

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Keeping Twins Together or Separate in the Classroom... A Parent's Dilemma

The summer has flown by and here we are at the start of another school year. It seems like as my fraternal twins get older, the years seem to fly by even faster and faster and I find myself questioning why time is so fleeting. My twin boys have just started their junior year in high school and only have one more "first-day" to go after this year... To me, it feels like it was just yesterday when they went to their very 1st day of Kindergarten!

Sending your twins to school may seem like it is so far away when you are in the thick of diaper changes, feedings, potty training and toddler-hood. Life with multiples is a whirl-wind at every stage and the "school-age" years arrive seemingly without warning!

We are lucky to live in an area where our school district allows parents to choose whether their twins will be together or separate in the classroom. When my boys started Kindergarten, they were placed in separate classrooms that were right next door to each other. Separating the boys worked well for them and they adjusted quickly to their own respective classrooms and friends and also seemed to enjoy spending more time together after school and on the weekends, too. My twins are completely different and one definitely excels more than the other academically and there are marked differences in their rate of retention, etc.

We placed them in separate classrooms in 1st and 2nd grade as well. By having them in separate classes, I quickly realized that they had teachers that were very different and had completely different teaching styles. It was much more of a challenge for me to keep on top of everything since often they were learning subjects at different times based on the teacher they had.

If your schedule allows, I highly recommend that you spend time at their school, volunteer and get to know the teachers at the school. It makes it much easier for you as a parent to advocate for your children and to request a teacher that best matches each of your twins' learning styles. When you are familiar with the teachers and climate at the school, it is much easier for you to identify where your kids should be placed.

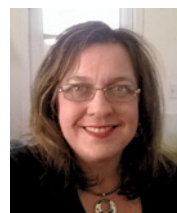
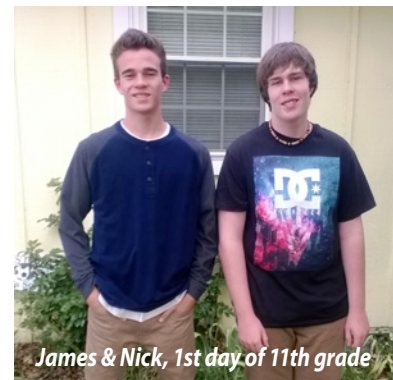
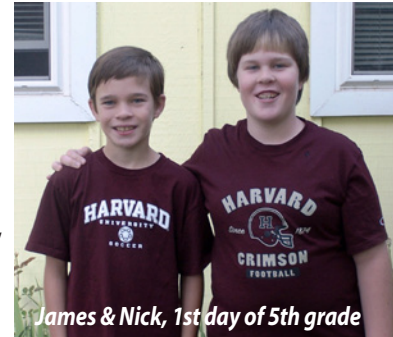
At the end of 2nd grade, I already had a good idea of which 3rd grade teacher I wanted for both of my boys and that just so happened to be the same teacher. For the first time since pre-school my twins were together again in the classroom for 3rd grade. It worked well and was nice to have them doing the same homework at the same time and they both had successful years. In 4th grade, I had just delivered my fourth son and felt like it would be much easier and better for our family (and my sanity) to keep them together again. But, it was in 4th grade where I started noticing much more of a shift in peer perceptions and this is when fellow

classmates started to compare my twins which made them both feel bad, especially when they would say to the twin that struggled more in school... "why aren't you like your brother?" or "Why is your brother so much better than you in everything?" type of questions. This really made my son feel bad about himself and I knew right then, the very best thing for my boys moving forward would be to make sure in the 5th grade they were in separate classrooms once again. This was the best move for them and they both had a successful 5th grade year as well. Now, after going through middle school and half-way through high school, they have only been in one class together and that was last year when they were both in choir. Looking back, we believe that we did the right thing when our twins needed it. Despite whether your school has a policy in place or not, don't let anyone tell you what is best for YOUR children.

Keeping them together or separate is a choice best made by you!

Inside this issue, we tackle the "Great Classroom Debate" and provide some good information for you on pros and cons of keeping them together or separate at school. We also cover topics like: tips on building self-esteem; crushing the myth of good twin, bad twin; how to avoid the boredom trap, easy food for twin infants and we review some fantastic family fun spots you should definitely check out. Be sure to read our article exploring whether double the kids' equals double the divorce rate and we feature 40 adorable summer-themed sets of twins in our popular "Double Takes" section!

Want more of TWINS? You can join the conversation with us daily on Facebook, Twitter and check out all our twin pins on Pinterest, too!



Sincerely,

Christa Reed

Christa Reed,
 Editor-in-Chief

Inflatable Car Booster Seat Works Well for Parents with Multiples!

Many parents of multiples experience the same issue when their kiddos reach age 4: it is a tough struggle to fit 2-3 booster seats side-by-side in the back of the car! Not to mention the need to transport these multiple booster seats into a different automobile in light of an unexpected car change. Not to worry...the BubbleBum, the first-ever inflatable car booster seat, solved this dilemma! BubbleBum includes belt positioning clips in place of arm rests, so it's easy to fit three boosters across the back seat of a car, minivan, or SUV. Featured on the *Today Show*, BubbleBum is also the perfect solution for unexpected carpools with multiples, as it weighs in at less than 1 pound and deflates in minutes, making it simple to transport into another car if need be.

BubbleBum is the coolest and most fun way for kids ages 4-11 to travel in the car to school, sports practice, and more. It keeps kids safe and comfy in the car, and kids go gaga over the booster seat's vibrant and trendy purple, black, neon pink, and neon yellow designs! It is a fantastic alternative to the standard plastic booster seat and is perfect for everyday carpooling, school drop offs and pickups, road trips, fly-ins with car rentals, and taxi cabs. BubbleBum is a top choice when it comes to safety. With



its satisfactory design for parents and children, BubbleBum won GOLD in the 2014 National Parenting Publications Awards and is proud to join the exclusive winners circle selected by the PTPA (Parent Tested Parent Approved) Media Awards. BubbleBum was also announced the IIHS (Insurance Institute of Highway Safety) "Best Bet" in their booster seat evaluation report, where they've branded BubbleBum as one of the best for safety!

BubbleBum (\$29.99) is sold online at their website, Target.com, and BabiesRUs.com. It is also available in Walmart stores and select Target stores nationwide. You can also connect with them on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.

Youngest Twin Inventors in the USA Celebrate 5 years in Business!

At age six, after inventing the Buggie Bag, Josh and Zack Neyens became the youngest twin inventors in the USA. From an idea these twins had in their garage to now seeing their product on store shelves, they are the great American story of youth and innovation with hard work and dedication.



Buggie Bags are innovative designer dust covers for off road vehicles, golf carts and motorcycles and truly changed the automotive industry for ever. Not only do these adaptable durable covers stretch to fit a variety of vehicles, the boys are the pioneers in large design graphics on their covers giving their customers fashion and function in one really cool product!

Now age 11, they celebrate 5 years in businesses and the boys are mentored by some of the largest business and CEOs and they have some of the world's largest retail chains interested in their products. Buggie Bags are currently being used around the world to protect a variety of vehicles and continue to develop other lines of protective covers for a variety of industries. Buggie Bags are available on their website, at Dash Designs, Sears.com and recently just tested in Sam's Club in the Denver market, along with numerous home shows they attend throughout the year.

Learn more about these Twininventors by visiting their website: www.coverinnovations.com or www.buggiebag.com or you can also connect with them on LinkedIn as the youngest twininventors in the USA!

New PBS Documentary Twin Sisters to air in October!

There is a new documentary called *Twin Sisters* which will air on the PBS series *Independent Lens* on Monday, October 30, 2014. *Twin Sisters* tells the amazing true story of Mia and Alexandra, twin Chinese infants found in a cardboard box and taken to an orphanage in 2003. Thousands of miles away, two hopeful families — Wenche and Sigmund in Norway, and Andy and Angela in Sacramento — got word that their search for a child was over. Each couple arrived in China to claim their longed-for babies but by a twist of fate, they also met each other — and, noticing how much the girls looked alike, started to wonder if their new daughters might be connected. Despite the authorities assuring them the girls were not twins, the new mothers exchanged contact information and a year later decided to do a DNA test.

By the time the results confirmed that the girls were indeed twins, they were deeply entrenched in their new families. In the U.S., Mia was growing up to be a typical, all-American girl, with a bustling life filled with violin lessons, Girl Scouts, and soccer, while in Norway, Alexandra lived a quieter life in the breathtakingly beautiful but isolated village of Fresvik, population 243. As soon as the girls were old enough to understand, their families told them about their twin on the other side of the world and they began to communicate despite the distance and language barrier. When finally they meet again in Norway as eight years olds, Mia and Alexandra not only look and act alike, but are unmistakably linked to each other.

Twin Sisters is a poignant examination of our notions of family — the genetic ones we inherit and the ones we create. View the Documentary Trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQu021wUzVc>



Preview YouTube video IDFA 2013 | Trailer | Twin Sisters

Teenage Twins Write New Book about being Twins!

Hannah and Cailin Loesch, are seventeen-year-old identical twins who have recently wrote a book on their adventures and misadventures of being twins called, *The Twin Connection*, which will be published by Wyatt-MacKenzie in October of this year. The book is written with a teenage sense of humor, but it's filled with stories and lessons that apply to twins of all ages, parents of twins, and even non-twins!



You can read more about it at: www.thetwinconnection.info

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheTwinConnect>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheTwinConnectionBook>

Tumblr: <http://thetwinconnectionbook.tumblr.com/>

These talented twins are also online reporters for Emmy-winning TV newsmagazine series Teen Kids News (www.TeenKidsNews.com) - and interview stars on the red carpet together! You can see their interviews all in one place on their own website, www.loeschtwins.com.





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Good Twin **BAD** Twin

Crushing the Classic Myth

by Patricia Malstrom



My first encounter with the myth that twins come packaged as a pair—one good and one bad—came more than 20 years ago in my neighborhood supermarket. As I rolled a grocery cart carrying my 10-month-old twin daughters past a woman standing in front of the apple bin, she called after us, “Which one is the good one and which one is the bad one?” Speechless, I hurried our cart into the canned goods aisle. There I caught my breath, smiled at my two—who were busy untying each other’s shoelaces and wondered how anyone could ask such a question.

Twins are up against the human penchant for comparing, contrasting and labeling. Since they are born a “matched set” so to speak, they are often appropriated as symbols of the good and bad in all of us. Ancient myths and modern movies are peopled with twins made to represent polar opposites. A well-known example is the Old Testament story about the twins, Jacob and Esau. Their mother, Rebecca, fueled a rivalry between them with far-reaching consequences because she favored the sensitive and cultivated Jacob over his more impulsive twin Esau.

Unfortunately, most people have more familiarity with twin myths than with living, breathing twins, who are, after all, just two little kids. As one mother of adult twin sons put it, “I was amazed at how good both my twins were. From an early age there was so much caring and compassion between them. If I offered one a cookie, he wouldn’t take it until he made sure there was a cookie for his brother, too. I tried, but

could never seem to teach my single-born kids to be as thoughtful of each other.” She says she protected her boys from intrusive public scrutiny and twin myths while they were growing up by giving them distinctly different names. She never dressed them alike, and avoided any other emphasis on their twinship. Today they are both professional musicians and best friends.

We parents have the job of ensuring that our multiples have a chance to fulfill themselves, to grow up to develop their individual potentials—those that are the same and those that are different. To do that we need to rid ourselves of any myths lurking in the back of our own minds and, unlike the biblical Rebecca, resist any impulse we might have to favor one over the other.

Susie Robertson, president of her local twins club, says that she is surprised by the number of members who say one of their newborn twins is easy-going and one is fussy. The mothers tell her that it’s very hard to fall in love with the baby who needs special handling. They worry that they will bond only with the easy-going child. She reassures them that this too shall pass. As babies mature, colic and fussing fade away, mom’s energy picks up and life in the hurricane becomes more manageable. It may take a bit longer, but love will grow between mom and dad and all of the kids.

While few parents believe the myth of a good twin-bad twin split, some fall into the trap of contrasting their twins’ personality traits and abilities—easy and difficult, pretty and smart. Of course, there

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Clear your head of myths.
- Avoid labeling the children.
- Teach them that they are neither carbon copies nor opposites.
- Encourage each child to develop his or her strengths, same or different.
- Disapprove of bad behavior, but not the child.
- Speak up for the children when necessary.
- Praise them when they stick up for each other.
- Find help if you feel overwhelmed.

are times when any parent becomes disenchanted with one over the other—a colicky baby is no picnic; nor is a cranky, rebellious toddler. Wise parents keep these feelings to themselves. When they speak of differences between their twin children, they translate them into positives and avoid negative labels. “Amy has so much energy. Lila stays calm no matter what.” “Harold is a planner. Todd’s the engineer.”

Some parents have to go to bat for their babies right from the start. A mother of preemies told me that when her own mother saw the larger of her tiny newborn grandsons for the first time, she declared, “This one’s a bruiser. He’s going to beat up the little one.” At that the young mom burst into tears and told her mother, “Don’t you ever speak that way again.” Fortunately, grandmother learned quickly and has cooperated ever since.

Within the family, parents can control their own behavior and perhaps sway the relatives. But there’s no easy way to protect our multiples from inappropriate questions and comments of their classmates, teachers, coaches and strangers. The best defense is to demonstrate a positive attitude about twinship and about any differences between your children.

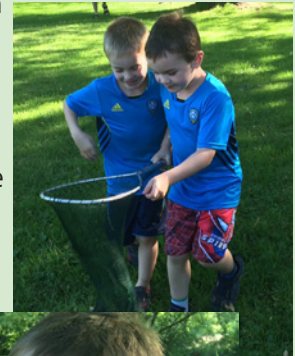
A mother of 12-year-old boys told me that friends of their family rank the boys according to their own preferences. For example, their sporting friends rate her athletic son higher than his left-handed twin who loves music. Her twins and their classmates have a hard time understanding that different does not mean good and bad. She tells them over and over that their differences are OK. They are two separate people with different talents. Whenever one of her boys has a particularly hard time, she takes a step back and thinks as if she were on a job—to help each develop their own self-esteem. And she makes sure that the boys’ teachers and coaches understand each boy’s special talents, too. Her boys may not understand everything their mother tells them now, but her words and actions demonstrate a model they can use when they encounter the myth on their own.

Perhaps you and your family will never experience a version of this myth, but if you do, be ready with a positive attitude. If I could roll back the clock, I know now just what I would say to that woman in the supermarket, “Oh these are both good girls!” ♥

Patricia Malstrom founded *Twin Services* and is co-author of *The Art of Parenting Twins*. She is mother to four adult children, including identical twins.

Hi Twins Magazine!

I wanted to send you a couple of photos of our fraternal twin sons - Scott (left) and Brayden (right) - proudly showing off a bull frog they captured a couple weeks ago in their grandpas pond in Fenwick, Ontario in Canada. They are true little boys... They love reptiles, bugs & mud! ;-) Our sons are 5-years old and were born on October 30, 2008. This past winter



Scott was quite ill... So nice to have our boys back together and having lots of fun!

Sincerely,

Nicole & Grant Zavitz, Grimsby, Ontario CANADA

Dear TWINS Magazine:

Here is a photo of my 3-year-old twins Paisley Jo and Hanley Mae Heflin. I do not actually know if my girls are fraternal or identical. They were in separate sacs, but shared the same placenta. Our doctor told us that the more cases he has seen like this we should not just assume they are fraternal because that is not always the case! Paisley was born nearly three pounds smaller than Hanley and we got them within half a pound of each other around 3 months of age. It was extremely hard to tell them apart. Now, there is typically at least a 2-3 lbs difference so it makes telling them apart much easier for us!



Thanks,

Sarina Petrescu, Vinita, Oklahoma, Via email

10 Tips for Building Self-Esteem

by John Clark

When helping to build your children's self-esteem, never under-estimate the power of your positive influence. Here are 10 suggestions that will help you in the process.

1 Remember, your children are each a unique treasure.

Recently, I was entrusted with the care and keeping of our five children for several days. As we ambled through the zoo one afternoon, I pushed the double stroller that carried our 2-year-old twins, while the other three children competed for hand-holds on either side. Soon I became aware of an interesting phenomenon. As we made our way from one cage to the next, the visitors at the zoo began turning their attention from the animals to our own little menagerie, staring as we passed. I know we were a sight to behold!

I thought about the beauty and interesting behavior of each of our children – no two being exactly alike, even our twins! I promised myself at that moment that I would make sure

I told each one of my children every day that she or he is a precious gift!

2 Make sure your marriage is sound.

Children seeking self-esteem need the security of a strong marriage. However, it's important to realize that a marriage relationship does not remain static. The two partners either grow together as a couple or move apart. All couples are going to experience some stress in their relationship, but to foster their children's security and self-worth, parents need to reassure them that they love each other and will stay together as a family.

3 Take advantage of interruptions.

"Dad, can you play ball?" "Mom, can you read me a book?" Many times parents' standard response to such requests is, "Just a minute." Waiting 'a minute' does not damage children's self-esteem, but sometimes the minute becomes 10 minutes, then an hour, then it is forgotten. No child wants to face the fact that his request – and, in his mind, he himself – is forgotten.

Therefore, part of the secret of helping children feel important is to learn to view their unplanned requests as opportunities to do some self-esteem-building instead of as inconveniences to their parents' schedules.

4 Plan some 'down time'.

Be sure there is a "nap time" scheduled – not for your children, but for you! Especially if you are a stay-at-home mom or dad with young ones around, you will not be as effective in helping your children feel good about themselves if you come to the task tired and worn. Try to schedule at least 15 to 30 minutes in the afternoon that is yours to do with as you please.

I know what you're thinking – this is impossible. It will, indeed, take some effort at first, but even toddlers can be taught to rest quietly for awhile. It will be a discipline worth developing.

5 Take your kids to lunch.

Our children learned at an early age that some of their dad's most important meetings take place over lunch. So I began

having a standing appointment for lunch with each of our children one day a week. I must say that most of our conversation has centered on the acquisition and consumption of food. But that's OK. My main objective is to have a good time and communicate how special each child is to me.

Sometimes the conversation takes unexpected turns. Just the other day, I was at lunch with Julianne, our 7 year old, who was admiring the playground toys. "Daddy, do you remember when I used to hide in the big hamburger and you would act like a monster and try to get me?" She remarked, adding wistfully, "Those were the good ole days."

To me, those...and these days of more recent lunches are warm memories!

6 Don't be afraid to apologize.

When you have made a blunder in your relationship with your children, tell them so and apologize. When we choose to gloss over or ignore our gaffes, we project the notion that we are infallible. Instead of helping our children see that it's OK for them to make mistakes, we simply reinforce the idea that they must be something they are not.

7 Utilize your children's mistakes.

When your son walks in and says "Dad, I broke a window with the baseball," or your daughter says, "Mom, I failed a test," do not overlook the fact that these are opportunities for the building of self-esteem. Use your children's mistakes to demonstrate your unflinching acceptance of them, and then problem-solve with them how to learn from their mistakes. When children realize that their parents accept them at their worst, as well as their best behavior, they will much more readily accept themselves unconditionally.

8 Take plenty of pictures.

My wife has prepared five small photo albums for our children; each features a particular child. I have been amazed at how much time my children spend reviewing their albums. The albums remind our children that they are a part of a family who cares about the experiences its members share.



Continued on page 31

International Twins Association (ITA)

Come celebrate 80 years with us!



Each year over Labor Day Weekend we come together and celebrate the amazing bond of multiples! This year's 80th Annual ITA Convention will take place **August 28-31, 2014** at Chicago's North Shore Conference Center at the Hilton Doubletree Hotel.

Twins/Multiples of all ages are invited to attend and friends and family are also welcome. We will be touring the Museum of Science & Industry, Downtown Chicago, and a 1920's Gangster tour (*including 1920s themed dinners, DJ, dancing & special entertainment*) and much more!

Proud media sponsor:



Sign up for our popular TWINS Judging Contest held on Sunday, August 31st @ 1:00 PM where we find the most look alike twins and least look alike twins in every age category! Learn more and register online at:

www.Intltwins.org

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TWINS



Organized by and for twins in 1934, ITA is a non-profit, family-oriented organization dedicated to promoting the spiritual, intellectual and social welfare of twins and multiples throughout the world. ITA is comprised of twins, multiples and surviving multiples of all ages.



CHICAGO





PREGNANCY

Amy E. Tracy is the author of *The Pregnancy Bed Rest Book* (www.bedrestonline.com) and the coauthor of *Your Premature Baby and Child* (www.preemie-parents.com).

Expecting the **UNEXPECTED** Preparing for an Early Delivery

by Amy E. Tracy

Nothing was easy about Desiree Childress's third pregnancy. Soon after she and her husband, Will, learned they were expecting identical twin boys, she experienced severe nausea. Having trouble holding anything down, she became dehydrated and IV lines for fluids were placed.

At about 18 weeks, preterm labor began and strict at-home bedrest prescribed. With two young daughters at home, Tiffany, 9, and Victoria, 5, Desiree found staying off her feet and reducing stress nearly impossible. Five weeks later, she was hospitalized.

Both nurses, Desiree and Will knew that these early complications and a twin pregnancy increased the likelihood of a premature delivery. Over 50% of multiples are born prematurely (before 37 weeks gestation), or weigh less than five and one-half pounds. Many preemie multiples require weeks of hospitalization and special medical attention.

By getting expert care in the hospital, Desiree hoped her babies would arrive close to term, but she also wanted to be prepared for the unexpected. David and Isaiah were born eight weeks early, each weighing a little over three pounds. "You really can't prepare for the reality of delivering preemies, but knowing what to expect made it a little less overwhelming," she says.

Julie Medas, a clinical neonatal nurse specialist at MetroHealth Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, agrees. She says that learning about the neonatal intensive care nursery (the NICU) and what a preemie looks like "won't provide comfort, but it will give parents a sense of familiarity should their babies arrive early and need special care."

TAKING A TOUR

Medas recommends that parents experiencing pregnancy complications ask for a tour of the NICU and visit a baby of comparable gestational age. "The perception is that seeing a preemie will overwhelm parents, but sometimes the imagination is far worse," she says.

A neonatologist or a neonatal nurse can explain some of the medical equipment and common problems of preemies. Your hospital may also offer a video or booklet about the NICU. If information becomes stressful, cut your visit short and come back another day.

"The NICU can seem like a foreign land with an unfamiliar language," says Medas. Take your time to absorb this new world, and don't be afraid to ask questions. Some suggestions:

- What are visiting hours, and who can visit?
- Will my babies be placed near each other?
- How can I participate in my babies' care?
- Does the NICU encourage skin-to-skin contact, music therapy, or infant massage?
- Are multiples co-bedded (placed in the same bed)?
- What resources are available to parents of premature babies and multiples?
- Is there a developmental program (occupational and physical therapy) for preemies?
- Is there a place for parents to spend the night?
- Is CPR training offered?

RESEARCHING RESOURCES

On bed rest and with time on her hands, Desiree created a notebook of resources she'd need after the twins' birth: "I made a list of dependable support systems, those who I could really count on like my church to provide meals and sitters my girls really liked." She also included important names and phone numbers, such as her insurance provider and pediatrician.

To find out what services and help you may need following your babies' birth, talk with your hospital social worker or a nurse. Also, ask if there are any local preemie parent or mothers of multiples support groups: A parent of preemie multiples can offer first-hand advice. Mothers of Supertwins (www.mostonline.org; (631) 859-1110) and the Triplet Connection (www.tripletconnection.org;

(209) 474-0885) offer programs and literature to support expectant mothers of multiples.

Desiree joined a mothers of multiples club in her third trimester. "At first, it was scary because all of the mothers of twins in the group had delivered prematurely," she says, "but it also gave me hope to see that their children were okay, and they offered great support."

BREAST MILK BASICS

When you're coping with pregnancy complications and the risk of premature babies; thinking about breast-feeding can be daunting, to say the least. But learning about breast milk and how it can help your babies is something important you can do for your babies.

"Some doctors consider breast milk a medicine for preemies," says Medas. Research shows breast milk is less stressful on a preemie's digestive system and kidneys, provides important antibodies that fight infection, and protects against allergies.

Babies who are born very small and very sick will not have the ability to breast-feed during their first days or weeks of life, but they can receive breast milk through a feeding tube placed in their nose or mouth. This means mothers have to pump and store their milk. A lactation consultant with knowledge of a preemie's special needs can provide instruction. Ask your pediatrician, the hospital staff, or La Leche League (www.la lecheleague.org; (847) 519-7730) for a referral. Many NICUs have lending libraries that include breast-feeding books and videos, too.

"Even if you can't or choose not to breast-feed, you can still provide your babies with the best nutrition possible," says Medas. And it's something only you, a mother, can do.

PREEMIE PARENTHOOD

"I was prepared for the monitors and technology in the NICU, but it was still overwhelming to see those two tiny little babies," says Desiree. "I couldn't see their faces because of the wires and tape. I couldn't hold them or feed them. I felt like I had really lost out."

If your babies' birth can't be delayed and you become a parent of preemie multiples, like Desiree and Will, you'll face many emotions: guilt, anger, sadness, and fear, to name a few. Having more than one baby adds to the stress: You may have two sets of medical complications to cope with, maybe even two sets of healthcare providers.

Making arrangements for help before your babies' birth is a good idea (whether or not you delivery prematurely). You'll need time to take care of yourself so that you'll have the energy to take care of your babies and family.

After a difficult pregnancy, you'll also need time to reflect on your losses. To help you cope with your feelings before and after delivery, consider starting a journal, or find someone who listens well (another parent, a social worker, a mental health expert, an Internet chat room, or a clergy member).

"Remember, feeling is healthy," says Mara Stein, a Chicago clinical psychologist who delivered twin girls ten weeks early. "But if your feelings start getting in the way of your life, affecting your marriage or other relationships, or you find yourself constantly feeling sad, you may need professional help," she says. Consult a trained therapist, such as a psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, or family counselor.

"Becoming a parent of preemies is the hardest thing you'll ever have to do," says Desiree, whose twins are now eight months old. "But when I look at David and Isaiah and see them smile, I know it's all been worth it." ♥

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984!

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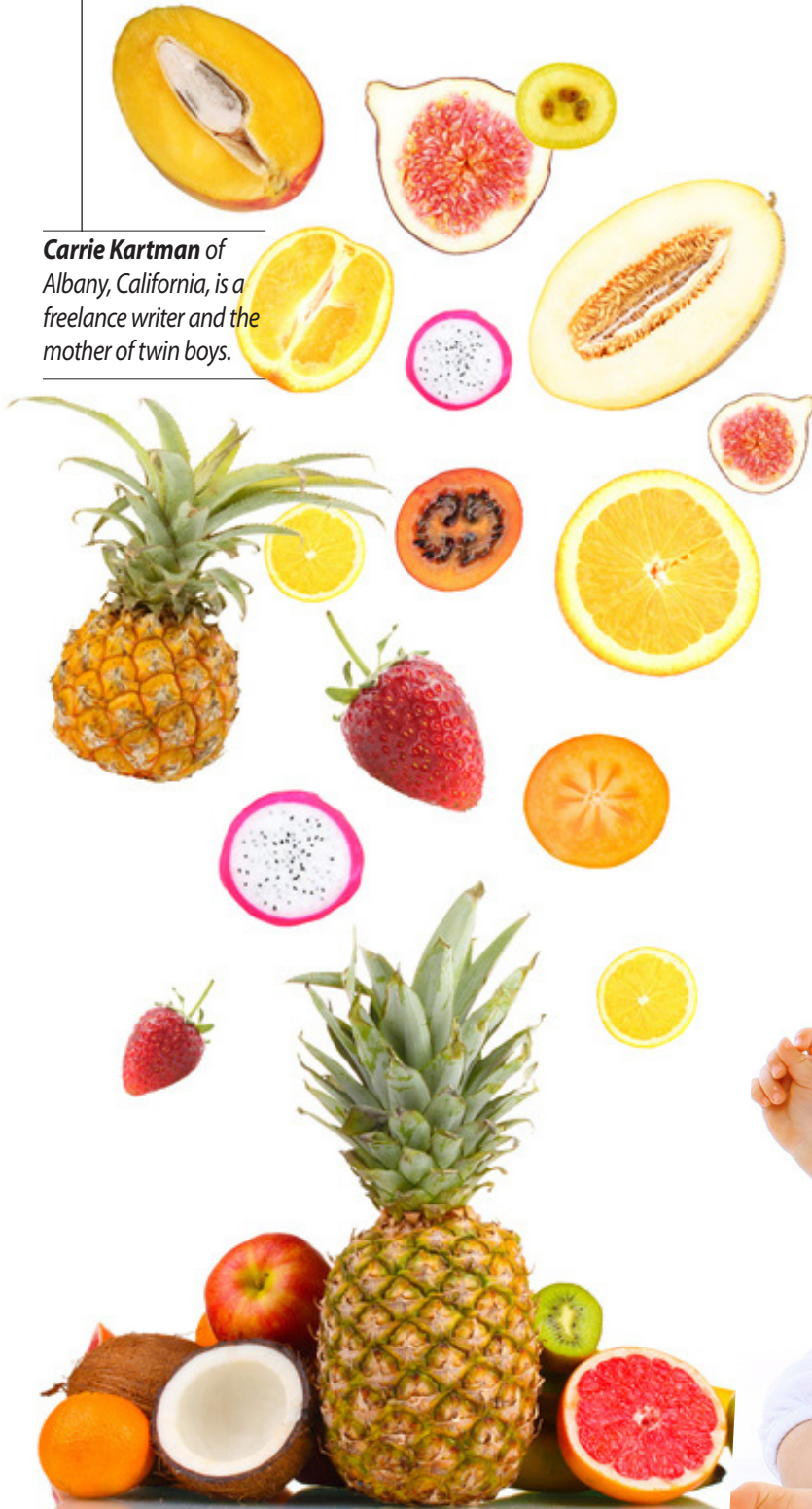
INFANT

EASY FOODS for INFANT TWINS

by Carrie Kartman

Carrie Kartman of Albany, California, is a freelance writer and the mother of twin boys.

When my twins were 5-months- old, I was thrilled to give them their first spoonfuls of rice cereal. I was breastfeeding, so this was a milestone in my liberation from being a full-time mommy milk machine. The future glowed before me. Anything was possible and they looked mighty cute with cereal all over their chins.



When they were 6-months-old, I began worrying about what other foods they could eat, and by 7-months I was practically stopping any stranger I saw pushing a stroller down the street to ask, "What do you feed your baby?" For many months the hot topic at our twins playgroup, and whenever two or more parents of the "under 1-year-old-gang" found themselves crossing paths, seemed to be what to feed our young ones. The need to find safe nutritious foods that didn't eat up our virtually nonexistent free moments with preparation was essential.

Of course there is always commercial baby food in jars. It's safe, sometimes palatable, and very convenient. Did I mention expensive? I opened far more pricey little jars than I ever thought I would because the five seconds it took to open a jar was precisely how much time I had to prepare the next meal for my ravenous duo. Sound familiar? And dry baby cereals such as rice and oatmeal are lifesavers, but you can't rely on those for absolutely every meal.



UNSOLICITED ADVICE

A well-meaning relative (my mother) gave me a cookbook of recipes for healthy baby meals filled with directions to "poach this, dice that and gently sauté the other," as though such culinary feats could be fathomed, much less accomplished, with my schedule. Friends who were raising and feeding a singleton baby told me in chipper tones of their exploits with fresh vegetables, a food processor, plastic baggies and the resulting neatly packaged and frozen-for-a-rainy day homemade baby food. Just the thought of it tired me out.

Through trial and error, talking to scores of other parents and a lot of label reading in the grocery store aisle, I eventually found an array of foods that with little or no preparation safely nourished my twins through their first year of life.

INTRODUCING NEW TASTES

Be careful when introducing a new food. Watch to see that your young ones can handle the texture and firmness without choking. Integrate new foods slowly—about one per week—to check for allergic reactions such as rashes, vomiting or diarrhea. Also, remember that a month or two may make a big difference in the foods your babies like and can manage.

Foods for babies from 6-months of age on: canned pumpkin; unsweetened apple-sauce, mashed bananas or melon; tofu (mine like the Japanese style 'silken' kind); yogurt; cottage cheese; unsalted crackers; breadsticks; mini rice cakes; cheerios, couscous, mashed pasta like macaroni or tortellini; and thoroughly steamed zucchini or carrots cut into quarters lengthwise (big favorites with my kids!)

Foods for babies 9-months of age on: shredded cheese or string cheese pulled apart into thin strips; canned refried beans (skip the lard and get low fat or vegetarian); toast with melted cheese or butter; bite-size shredded wheat well soaked in breast milk or formula (do not use cow's milk until after 12 months of age); cooked and well shopped spinach or peas; canned tuna with or without mayonnaise; matzo balls; soft polenta; and hardboiled egg whites.

Finally, if you open a baby food jar now and then, you're in good company. Enjoy your babies now, cook later! ♥

WATCH FOR YOUR BABIES' CUES:

During the first year, there will be significant changes to your babies' diet. They will go from breast milk or formula exclusively to solid foods:

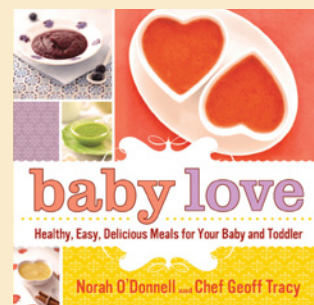
- When babies eat by pressing food against the tops of their mouths with their tongues and then swallowing, the food given should be extremely mushy.
- When babies start to eat with more of grinding motion, it's okay to add more thickness and texture to their diets.
- When babies' pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) is well developed, they are ready to pick up more bite-sized pieces of food.

Although you might think baby food is bland tasting, do not season the food. Introducing salt or sugar does not allow your little ones to experience the natural goodness of the food.

Source: The Mayo Clinic Complete Book of Pregnancy & Baby's First Year

YOU CAN DO IT!

Check out this fantastic book called "baby love...Healthy, Easy, Delicious Meals for Your Baby and Toddler"



by Norah O'Donnell and Chef Geoff Tracy

Now a cookbook that actually makes life EASIER for busy families today that

have multiples and more! If you ever thought it was too hard to make your own baby food for your twins, you won't after reading this new book.

Written by Norah O'Donnell, the co-host of "CBS This Morning" she also contributes to "60 Minutes," serves as the principal substitute anchor for "Face the Nation," and fills in as anchor for the "CBS Evening News" along with her husband, Geoff Tracy, an acclaimed chef and owner of five restaurants in Washington DC, together they have three children (including a set of boy/girl twins age 3) and these recipes are tried and true.



TODDLERS

AVOIDING *the* BOREDOM TRAP

Janet Gonzalez-Mena
of Napa, California,
teaches early childhood
education at Napa
Valley College. She
is author of the book
Dragon Mom and the
mother of five children.

by Janet Gonzalez-Mena



Bored teens are a problem in this country? Talk to any group of folks concerned with adolescents, and you'll hear that a lot of the bad things happen because many teens have nothing to do. They're bored so they get into trouble.

So, what do bored teenagers have to do with toddler twins? Boredom prevention starts early. It begins when parents clearly distinguish their own needs and perceptions from those of their children.

BOREDOM BREEDS EARLY

Here's an all too common scenario. A new parent peers over the side of the crib and sees a baby lying there unable to walk, talk or even lift its head. The parent imagines how it must feel to be so helpless. If the adult had just to lie there, he or she would feel bored. Therefore, the adult figures, the baby must feel the same.

The solution seems simple enough: entertain the baby. At the slightest whimper parents pick up their babies and carry them around. Or they may buy bunches of crib toys designed to entertain. They dangle things in front of their babies—things that make noise and move. And they prop their babies up in front of the TV.

What the parents don't realize is that babies have keen senses and a whole new world to explore. They don't need to do much except lie around and take everything in. Boredom is not a problem for babies. It's a problem for adults.

CREATING WHINERS

Multiples especially have an infinite variety of things to observe because they have each other. And it's not just human life that's interesting to them. The whisper of a breeze and the flutter of a curtain at a window provide a world of wonder.

When adults entertain babies rather than appreciating their need for lying around, they teach babies to be dissatisfied with life's little pleasures. Children learn in a hurry that just a little whimper can summon mom or dad to liven things up.

When this happens, babies stop observing curtains and listening to the wind. They forget that they have the capability of creating their own activity. They get hooked on more sophisticated entertainment. Then, when this entertainment stops, they whine and fuss, validating their parents' original assumption.

This problem creeps right into toddlerhood. Some parents are so used to keeping their babies entertained that they don't let up when the little ones get up on their feet.

Instead, they liven up their entertainment acts, provide more sophisticated toys, and turn the TV on more often, adding DVDs and finally computer or video games. None of these things: toys, TV, computer or video games, are problems in themselves. The problems come from adult perception that children don't have the ability to find self-satisfying ways to spend their time.

I've noticed that children who can easily create their own activities are those who watch little or no TV, have a reasonable number of toys,

an environment set up for them to play and parents who assume their kids can figure out things to do on their own.

LET KIDS ENTERTAIN THEMSELVES

It's not that those children who think up their own activities don't ever get bored. All children get bored sometimes, but boredom serves a function.

It provides an incentive for children to pursue new interests and create new activities. When parents see that their children are truly bored (not just bored in the mind of the parent) it's better to give them space and time to think up something to do rather than jumping in and fixing the problem for them.

I'm not trying to make parents feel guilty. Instead, I'm trying to look at a widespread problem that seems to worsen every year. It isn't anybody's fault. After all, we want the best for our children. However, most of us were influenced by the push for early stimulation.

We bought into the message that it's a parent's job to be sure children have plenty to do. I'm not an exception. I know firsthand about the tendencies we all have to entertain our children and keep them happy. Part of the problem is that, as a society, we see childhood as a period that should be free from burdens, so we don't require youngsters to take part in any of the work of creating and maintaining the home or the community beyond.

As a result they spend their childhood seeking entertainment. But when they run out of entertainment, they complain or get into trouble.

Toddlerhood is the perfect time to start teaching children to help out around the house. Two-year-olds like to do "grown-up things" if given the chance.

Of course, they don't have adult skills but can learn them through seeing that their involvement is part of keeping the house in order. Now, we don't want to overburden toddlers with too much responsibility. Childhood should be fun. It's fine to play with toddlers and buy them toys.

The issue is overindulgence. You can tell you've gone too far when children come to expect to be entertained and forget how to keep themselves' occupied. ♥

BATTLING BOREDOM

What can you do to keep from falling in the trap of being your toddlers' number one source of entertainment?

- Learn to separate your feelings from those of your children. Develop your powers of observation. Read behavioral clues. Are the behaviors you're reading as boredom really boredom, or are they signs of some other need?
- Avoid fixing every problem for them. If your children are truly bored, don't rush in too fast to fill the void. Give them time to think up something to do on their own before giving them a change of scenery, new toys or turning on the TV.
- Consider the environment. The way you set up the surroundings can make a difference in whether your children are easily bored; having enough choices of things to do and freedom to do them helps.
- Toddlers need space and encouragement to explore their world. They need to manipulate things. They need to be able to move freely and practice their growing skills of walking, running, climbing, rolling and more.
- Watch out for overstimulation. Just having each other around is stimulating enough for toddler multiples. Be careful about how much more you add to their worlds. A few simple toys are all that is necessary, not a warehouse of sophisticated gadgets.
- Be aware of how you play with your children. Join their play down on their level in an interactive way rather than always as an entertainer.
- Follow their lead. Again, watch out for overstimulation. If they get so wild they can't settle down when you're tired of playing, probably they have too much of a good thing.



PRESCHOOL

Getting ready for “real school”

J. Cameron Tew
of Wendell, North
Carolina is a newspaper
editor and the father of
triplet boys.

by J. Cameron Tew



Every Monday and Wednesday morning, I wake my sons, Brandon, Nathan and Jason, from their slumber. As they rub the sleep from their eyes, I help them pull on shirts and pants and get ready for a big day. We grab a quick breakfast, pick up their book bags and head out to “school”. For them, school consists of three hours at the local church pre-school. And from what I’ve seen, the social and developmental experience has been very valuable. Our three little boys who frequently refused to speak and only played with each other because they had few other friends, now talk up a storm. They have six other playmates with whom they finger-paint, shoot baskets and listen to stories during reading time. Sure, they still like to spend a lot of time together and share blocks and train sets, but at preschool they branch out. Jason can often be found reading books with Will. Nathan might be playing cars with Patrick. Brandon could be helping Allison pretend to iron clothes in the family-life play center. Being part of a classroom has given the boys a chance to develop individual identities with friends who don’t lump them together or refer to them as “the triplets.” To their buddies, they are different people who have different likes, dislikes and their own distinct personalities.

EXPLORING ON THEIR OWN

At preschool, they can explore all sorts of activities without their two brothers hanging around wanting to do the same thing to impress Mommy and Daddy. It has allowed them to blossom into confident and exciting little guys. Now, when I pick them up from school, each takes a turn telling me what he did that day at school.

“I played with Play-Doh,” Brandon might say, “And Jason colored.” “No, I not,” Jason says. “I draw a sharp tooth.” He opens his book bag and pulls out a piece of white paper with crayon marks all over it and proceeds to tell me how it is a dinosaur. Not to be outdone, Nathan pipes in, “Look Daddy,” he says. “I drew, too.” He holds up his piece of paper and describes the wonderful world he imagined where he and his brothers played baseball with their friends at school.

INDIVIDUAL TIME

Preschool is a place where structure takes over from the chaos of home. Sure, we try to set aside time at home to read books and work puzzles, but often we get sidetracked when someone wants juice or if the phone rings and we have to leave them to their own devices. At preschool, the day is their day. It’s their time to listen to other adults and try to please them. It’s their time to try new things, cutting out paper hearts or using glue to make cards for Mommy and Daddy. They have the structure of a teacher offering them a variety of ideas and projects to try and the freedom to choose which projects fit their fancy for the day. While we choose not to have our boys in a full-time day-care center, my wife and I believe that time spent away from us in another caring environment has helped Brandon’s, Nathan’s and Jason’s development.

LEARNING TO SHARE

The boys have always shared toys and understood that hoarding the coveted Woody’s

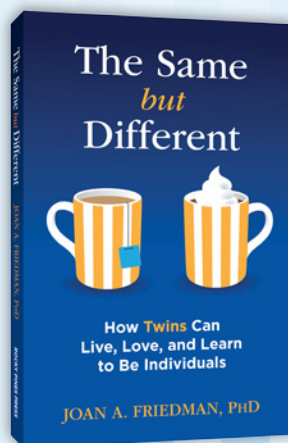
and Buzzes is not allowed. But, at preschool they have come to understand that sometimes they might have to choose a secondary toy to play with if some of their friends already have the prized toys. Trips to the playground mean that Brandon might have to head over to the slide because the three swings are already full. Patience with brothers and friends is tested, but the time spent working out their problems under the watchful eye of adults has given them more cognitive thinking abilities.

They understand that the consequence of cutting in line is sitting down for a few minutes. Brandon, Nathan and Jason always try to be aware that every playmate needs to get a turn at participating in special games or playing with the new toys.

My wife and I sometimes dread the thought of the boys moving on to Kindergarten in the near future. However, we are sure that attending preschool will have played a positive role in their development. Because of this valuable experience, we are confident that the boys will be ready for “real school.” ♥

DEALING WITH THE CHALLENGES OF BEING

A TWIN?



“*The Same but Different* presents a stunning, in-depth look at the lives of adult twins as they face the twin challenges of closeness and independence, love and resentment in their evolving relations with each other.”

—Nancy L. Segal, PhD, author of *Born Together—Reared Apart*

“Not only is *The Same but Different* a must-read for adult twins, it is an invaluable resource for the parents of younger twins who want to start their same-age children on the road to a healthy relationship in the future.”

—Lauren Apfel, PhD, blogger “Omnimom”

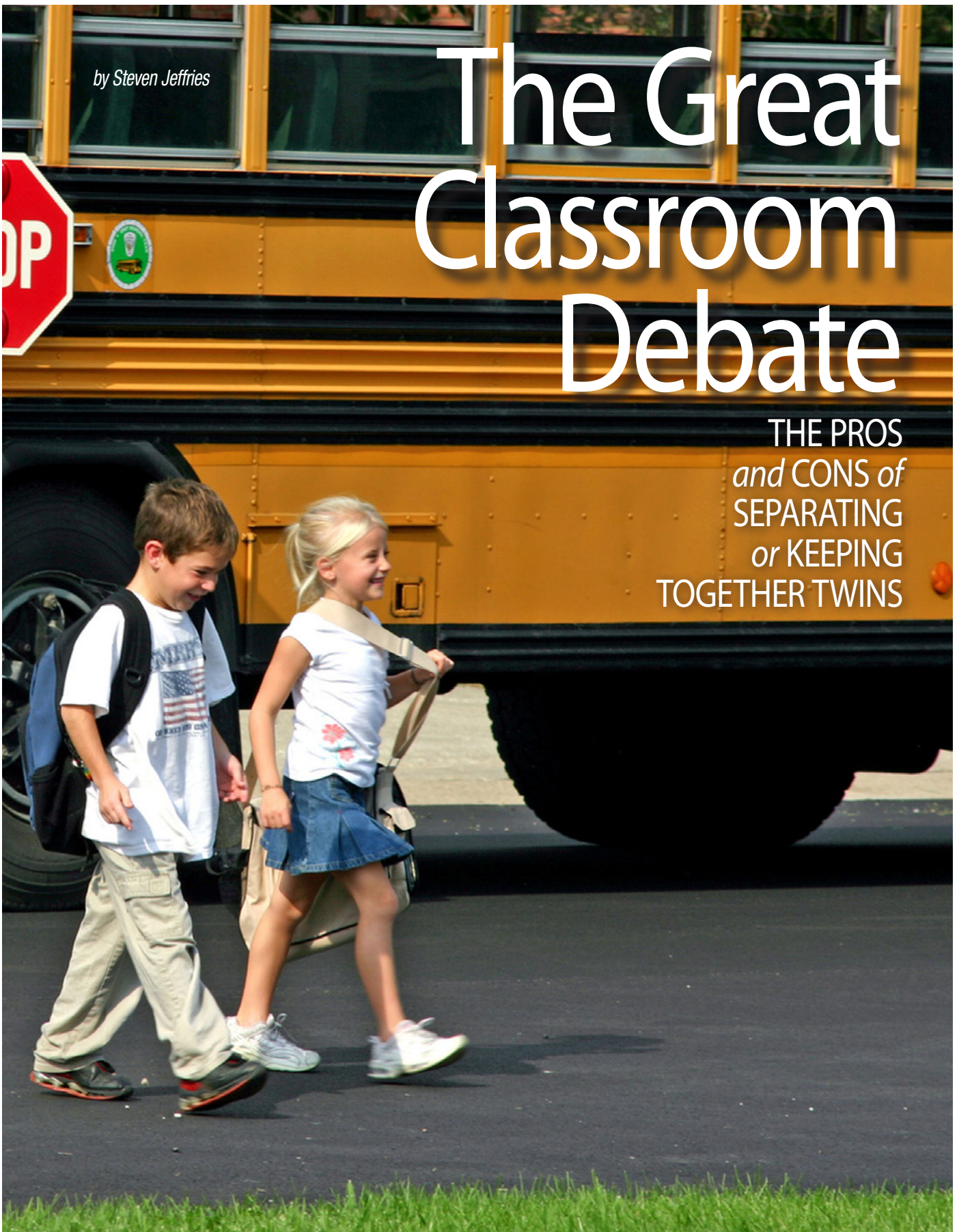
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by Steven Jeffries

The Great Classroom Debate

THE PROS
and CONS of
SEPARATING
or KEEPING
TOGETHER TWINS



It has been one full school year since our twins were placed in separate classrooms. This had not been our request, but as the school year approached, we were more pleased with the decision. So with the passing of the last day of school and the end of grade one, now is the perfect time to reflect on this change. Looking back, it has been a great year for both of our children. They have each made a ton of friends and by getting to know their friends' parents, we feel much more a part of the community.

We didn't make a request to keep our kids separated for grade two, but we assume they will be. However, what did work really well this year, and we did request in writing, was to again have our son and daughter in classrooms nearby, or in the same pod area. The school is large and it still increases their comfort level to be nearby each other.

My son and daughter started public school together in the same junior kindergarten class. This was our request and the school's principal was more than happy to comply. This situation went very well for two years. Our kids, according to their senior kindergarten teacher, were very independent of each other. She said that on occasion they would enter the classroom together holding hands, but would then separate for the rest of the day. Each twin was his and her own person with very different interests and friends. The teacher also recognized that our twins enjoyed each other's comfort, but that this did not impact negatively on either of their learning and growth.

This is why when we were moving to a new school, which was much larger, she suggested keeping our twins together for one more year. However, this request could not be accommodated by the new school's administration, and our kids were placed in separate classes, but right next door to each other as I explained earlier. The two classes even had gym together twice a week. Our kids still had the before and after school care program to see each other as well.

So now my wife and I have experienced our children in the same and separate classrooms. There are pros and cons to both situations. But the bottom line is that parents know their kids best and should advocate for which situation they feel is going to work for their twins. Keeping twins together is probably especially helpful at the beginning of their education, due to the fact that it adds a comfort level. Also, it can only be a positive for a child to start school with a close or best friend.

I am an elementary teacher as well as a father of twins. So from this combined perspective, there are two possible cons to your children being in the same classroom. If one tends to follow the other around like a puppy, he or she may be too dependent on his or her brother or sister. This is not a great learning situation for either twin. Also, teachers are human and have the tendency to compare. The other side of the coin is that in separate classrooms, comparisons by teachers are rare. If your twins are identical or fraternal but very hard to tell apart, being in separate classrooms helps the teachers better distinguish the two of them, not only physically but each one's unique personality. I remember writing report card com-

ments for each of two fraternal but very similar looking and acting twin girls. My principal rightly pointed out that the comments were almost identical and didn't reflect the differences in the two girls. He was right and I revised them to better reflect each girl's individual strengths and needs.

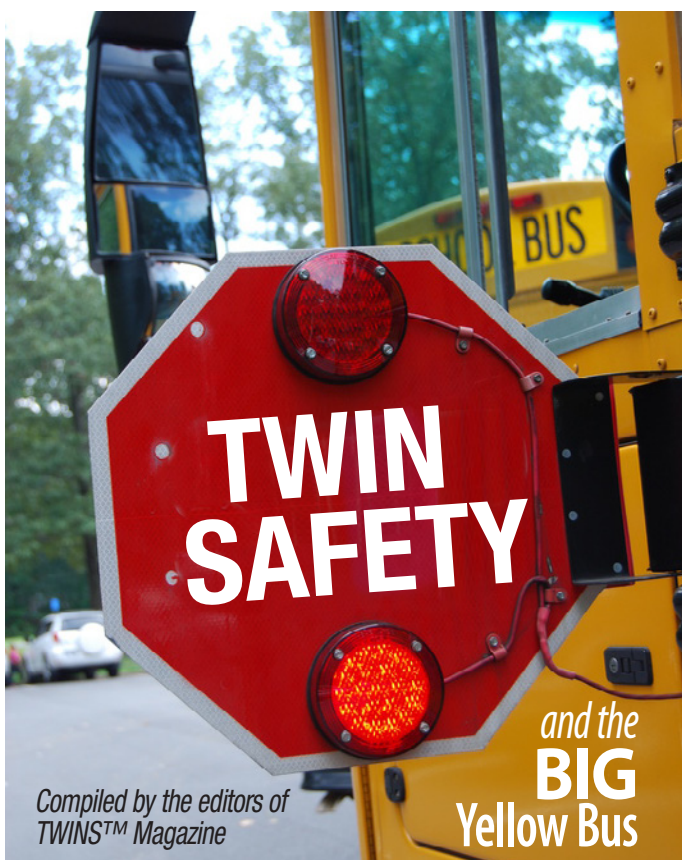
The biggest con that we found to having our twins in separate classes was dealing with different teacher's homework and other expectations. Sometimes teachers will plan together and even assign the same homework, but not always. It can become confusing on occasion. But we also found that each teacher seemed to fit our son and daughter's learning style, which was definitely an added benefit. Both of our kids loved their teacher.

In my experience as a teacher, most of the twins that I have taught in the early grades, started together in preschool or kindergarten and then were separated in grade one or two. A few pairs stayed together for longer, usually at the parents' request. It is true that some schools or school districts will separate twins as a so-called "policy" but the truth is that you know your children best, and can suggest what would be the best situation for them.

After a year of separation for my boy and girl, and looking back at the two years of being together (along with some time before that in day care), there were positives to both situations and they were the right fit for our kids, at each stage of their schooling. Each parent of twins must assess their own twins' needs and realize that both being together or in separate classes have merit, and to try to find the choice that is best. Hopefully, your school will cooperate. What to do if they don't agree is a subject for a future article! ❤️

Steven Jeffries is Canadian elementary teacher, husband, and father of seven year old twins. He writes about his experiences on his blog at <http://atwinsdad.blogspot.ca> and in his book, *Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins*.





Riding the school bus can be a new and exciting experience for many children and if your twins are heading off to school this fall, you should know some important safety tips when riding that big yellow bus. In most cases, it's the first time your twins have traveled on their own, away from the watchful eyes of their parents. That's good because it helps your twins gain a sense of independence as they learn to act safely and responsibly. To make their trip as safe as possible, read more about school-bus safety- and teach your children, too.

School Buses are Safer than Your Car

School buses are an extremely safe form of transportation, about 30 times safer than passenger cars. However, accidents do happen. According to a 2006 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the majority of accidents occur outside the bus, where children can be struck by the bus or motorists illegally passing the bus.

The Danger Zone

All school buses are surrounded by a ten-foot area known as the Danger Zone. In this area, it can be difficult for the driver to see, especially small children. The most dangerous parts of the Danger Zone are immediately in front of the bus and from in front of the rear wheels back to the rear of the bus. Multiple side-view and crossover mirrors, flat-nosed buses and crossing control arms all help increase the driver's field of vision and add to the safety of the children. Crossing-control arms are 6-foot gates, attached to the front of the bus, that are designed to keep children far enough in

front of the bus for them to be seen by the driver while they cross the street. The most effective safety measure, however, is for you to teach your twins how to avoid the Danger Zone.

Let the Driver Drive

School-bus drivers are trained professionals with a very demanding task. The driver must pay attention to constantly changing traffic conditions, the children on the bus, the children entering and exiting the bus at each bus stop, and the schedule the bus is on. Teach your twins to behave responsibly on the bus to help make the ride safer.

Give Kids a Break!

In your own vehicle, recognize YOUR responsibility when you approach a stopped school bus: Come to a complete stop, watch for children near the road, and don't pass the bus while it's stopped.

Plan for when you're not there

You or a caregiver should be at the bus stop or at home when your twins get off the bus. If that's not possible, make sure they know exactly what to do- continue straight home, wait for your call, go to a neighbor's house, or whatever you've arranged for them beforehand. And once again, be sure your twins understand to whom they should and shouldn't talk with when they're on their own.

Teach your twins well

If your twins are new to riding the bus, or if you're not sure they know the safety rules discussed in the article, walk them through the steps. Teach them both how to get to and from the bus stop as well as on and off the bus; also explain what's expected of them as they ride the school bus.

Waiting for the bus

Have your twins arrive at the bus stop on time and stand well away from the curb. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before boarding and don't crowd your friends getting on or off the bus; board and exit one at a time. Never play or stand in the aisles; find a seat and sit down.

Riding the bus

Make sure your twins stay in their seats and that they don't stick anything out the windows. Never, ever throw things in the bus and talking quietly with their friends instead of screaming and making noise is much safer. Children need to listen to the bus driver and bus monitor; follow their directions.

Getting on, off, and around the bus

Avoid the Danger Zone, because it's difficult for the driver to see your twins in this area. Take 10 giant steps beyond the front bumper of the bus before they turn to cross the street. This lets the driver maintain eye contact with them while they cross. They also need to look both ways before crossing the street and wait for the driver's signal. They should NEVER cross the street behind the bus and be sure that they keep away from the bus if they drop or forget something. ♡

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School Days! Two & Through

by Cheryl Lage

*Cheryl Lage is the author of **Twinspiration: Real-Life Advice from Pregnancy through the First Year** and is a writer/editor for The Parent Company family of content sites. She is also the webhost of www.twinsights.com, a support site for new and expecting twin parents. Cheryl lives in Richmond, Virginia, where she is a full-time, fully fulfilled mom of fraternal twins: Darren and Sarah, and happy parenting partner/wife to husband, Scott.*

So here we are...a mere two weeks, and our two kids are off to Kindergarten. We've done preschool and Pre-K, yet somehow this seems altogether different. And I'm not talking about the difference between 1/2 day and full day. Nor am I gauging the disparity as an academic factor (although by the supplies required and acquired—that is a significant aspect!)

For me, this transition to “real-school” is taking on an intensity right up there with the twin-magnified sleep-deprivation of the first few weeks and the utter chaos and unpredictability of tandem toilet training—to date, the two challenges I cite sans hesitation when asked “What has been the hardest

thing about parenting twins?”

Easing my husband's and my process during those thankfully time-blurred, doubly daunting stages has been a mantra my husband aptly phrased: “Two and through.” Acknowledging that yes, the tough tasks are dually so—times that could actually provide fodder for the oft-banded phrase “Double Trouble.” But as most honest twin parents I think will admit (unless they are in the middle of the first few sleepless weeks or the potentially numerous weeks/months of plural potty training), the windows of twice the wonderment have always more than balanced the scales.

Alas now, “two and through” (rather than providing its former solace and reminder of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel) has taken on an almost tragic aspect. Even with the undeniable hardships of day-to-day life with two same-age siblings (and I won't lie to you, there have been numerous days where but for prayer, wine and the love of a good man, I'd never have made it through), when it comes down to sweet and savory years of babydom, toddlerdom, stay-at-home-

with-Mommydom, for all ostensible purposes; sadly, our two are through.

Interestingly enough, our twins feel the dichotomy too in their twinimitable way. One minute, Sarah maturely insists on answering the family phone and making her own sandwich, yet the next moment re-adopts the whiny cadence and referring to herself in the third-person we fought so diligently at age three. Darren wants to tie his shoes, read his own books and talk with friends on the phone; but suddenly in the middle of the highway, he wants to pull over for a “Mommy hug.”

I feel it too, My Sweeties. No doubt after the smiles and hugs of encouragement upon dropping you two off in your respective classes that first day of school, I'll want to pull over for a big Daddy hug. ♡





Back to School

THOUGHTS FROM A STAY-AT-HOME DAD *already!*

by Larkin Campbell

How can it be? How can it be time to start thinking about going back to school again? It must be some mistake. It's maybe some weird, time wormhole thing in the universe. It can't be time yet. I still haven't finished the article in my wife's magazine on "HOW TO GET MY BODY READY FOR SUMMER".

For me, going back to school has not been all that traumatic yet. I have been a full-time stay-at-home-dad for five years now. My fraternal five-year-old twin boys, Colin and Casey, have been in pre-school for over two years. So going back to school meant a new lunch box for their cute little cubbies, and maybe a few new T-shirts from Target.

No sweat, no pressure and nothing to worry about. Until now... The time has come. My heart sputters and my head spins at the word but here it is...KINDERGARTEN.

How can this be? Where did the last five years go? Perhaps I misplaced them. Maybe one or two years slipped behind the TV, like those old Baby Einstein videos. I haven't pulled them out for a while, there is bound to be something besides Goldfish back there.

Except for the occasional acting job, I've been paying very close attention these past years with my little twin bundles. But where did I put years three to five? I remember bits and pieces. I even kept a journal for the good stories I didn't want to forget. Like the time Casey told me he thought their Doctor was very engaging. I'm going to miss that stuff. I want those years back. I don't want them back bad enough to have more kids, but I want them back.

Would it be embarrassing if I brought them to their first day of Kindergarten in our little double stroller? They almost fit if they just lift their feet. What happened to those stroller years? The last time I remember using that stroller was at the Wiggles concert a few years back. I even got to meet Jeff (and he looked sooo tired).

Kindergarten seems like such a big world for my little guys. Casey loves baseball, Frisbee and ice cream. Colin likes raspberries, drawing and bubble gum. Those are little boy's things.

Not (going to Kindergarten) big boy things. I've spent five years working on letters and numbers and farm animal identification. Now I'm being told that in Kindergarten they will have to learn to make change with coins. Can't I just teach them to use my Debit card instead?

I don't want my kids to go to Kindergarten land yet. Can't we just stay in Neverland? All my kid's teachers say my boys are clearly ready for Kindergarten. As you can see, Daddy is clearly not.

We took a tour of their new school recently, and it seemed like a nice place to visit (you know, kind of like Peru.) I just don't think I want to send my kids off to Peru either. How will they survive with only a small lunchbox full of snacks and supplies? Peru can be very intimidating to a five-year old with only a sippy-cup in hand to defend him.

During the tour we saw kids off all ages grades K-5. Now I'm not saying I was intimidated by some of these kids. But one of the bigger kids stared at me and I swear I thought he was going to demand my lunch money. Do they even still take lunch money? I don't know. But I whispered to my wife, "These 5th graders are huge." She quietly reminded me that we were looking at 2nd graders.

I understand all parents have gone through this before. Even Cave men had to send their cave-boys out into the world at some point. They had real concerns back then, like Dinosaurs, Tar pits and Asteroids, etc. I worry about things like towering 5th graders and real homework. To be honest, I'm more worried about the homework for myself than for my boys. For all these years my boys have truly believed that Daddy knew everything about everything. I fear my day of reckoning will soon be upon me.

Another thing I was told about Kindergarten was that they don't do arts and crafts. They do ART. That sounds good, but what about Art's good buddy CRAFTS? I like crafts. I have them all over our house. I feel Arts without Crafts will be like Hall without Oats. Crafts are stranded at the drive in, alone. Like me, standing at the bus stop as my kids drive away into the arms of this big mean world. It won't be easy, but I will just have to get used to saying the phrase "BACK TO SCHOOL" every year as they grow. I hope it won't be harder than the first day of pre-school, when their teachers were begging me to leave (I kept trying to slip the boys a plastic spoon and have them tunnel their way out...)

I know that my twin boys are happy, healthy and ready to tackle anything the world of Kindergarten can throw at them. I guess us parents will just have to dig deep and be strong. I must let my sons know that just because Daddy is afraid of this new place called Kindergarten, they shouldn't be. But here's a little extra lunch money & a plastic spoon...just in case! 💖

Larkin Campbell is a screenwriter and actor living in Los Angeles with his wife and five-year-old twin boys, Colin and Casey. Larkin has been seen in many television shows including: SCRUBS, LAS VEGAS, 24, WITHOUT A TRACE, CRIMINAL MINDS & HOUSE, to name a few. Being a stay-at-home-dad is Larkin's favorite job and he enjoys coaching his boys T-ball team and helping them become happy young men.



Do Double the Kids = Double the Divorce Rate?

by Amy Levin-Epstein



"Parents of multiples have triple the divorce rate." This was the statement that mega-multiple mom Kate Gosselin made a few years ago on the premiere of the fifth season of TLC's *Jon & Kate Plus 8*, before tearfully adding "I was thinking we were going to beat that." Of course, Kate and her husband Jon have since split, and her statement left multiple moms wondering—is it true?

Even though the experts and parents interviewed for this story admit that it's hard to tell if marital stress would be any different with one child—or without any children at all—all agreed that it isn't easy. "We have less time for each other, twice the cooking, diapers, cleanup and expenses. We're exhausted so we're more irritable with each other," says Matt Cohen of Woodbridge, Connecticut, who is the husband of Sarah Meshberg-Cohen and father to their 16-month-old twins. The good news: kids grow up, and you'll have an empty nest (or at least, a diaper-less house) sooner than you can imagine. And might your marriage even mature through

this time? "Of course," says Pat Malmstrom, twin mom, contributor to *TWINS* and author of *The Art of Parenting Twins*. "You've had a very unusual experience together, a huge life adventure." In that spirit, here are some tips to help you divide and conquer—without dividing your union.

Parenting twins or more is like boot camp for your relationship. Here are some survival skills you can use to cope:

Issue: Early On, They Hit You Like (Two or More) Mack Trucks

"When you have one baby, you have these wonderful moments of mastery," says Joan Friedman, PhD, herself a twin and mom of twins, and the author of *Emotionally Healthy Twins*. Unfortunately, adds Joan, with two, once you soothe or feed one, the other one is ready to tear your new confidence down.

Solution: Friedman advises couples to speak during the pregnancy about a game plan and "make sure you have help." And once the

babies are born, be specific about what you need from your husband. “Women often wait for their husbands to do something and if they fail, they get mad. They have to be absolutely upfront about what they need and ask [for it] in a nice way,” says Friedman, adding that this team effort will pay off for Dad: “With one baby, the mother takes over initially. But with twins, there are two babies home at the same time, dad has the opportunity to jump right in and bond.”

Issue: You Feel Isolated

When you’re at your wit’s end, your first instinct may be to call other new mom pals. But if they’re not fellow moms of multiples, their cries of “only 5 hours of sleep” may make you feel like crying yourself (you would kill for 3!).

Solution: Join the club—a mom of multiples support group. Your new pals can act as highly-trained babysitters—and you can reciprocate the favor, making this a safe, economical to hiring help or relying on an overwhelmed grandparent. According to Meshberg-Cohen, “We have monthly meetings. Moms can go and talk to other moms of multiples. [These groups] really help.” (visit: www.nomotc.org to find a local club in your area.)

Issue: You’re Too Exhausted To Really Connect

“My husband and I both work full-time so by the time we get home, make dinner and clean up, spend quality time with the kids, give baths, and get the kids to bed, we are extremely tired. Some nights we may have only have a 10-minute conversation without interruption,” say Jessica Glick of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, along with her husband Mike is parenting two sets of twins ages 4 and 6.

Solution: Reconnect in little ways, says Malmstrom: “One of the best things is to hug. You may not have time to talk. You may not even know what to say.” And remember that your husband isn’t just a babysitter—or another child. “Daily acts of kindness go a long way towards keeping a relationship strong,” says Flais.

Issue: Who Is This Man?

If you suspect a veil of sleep deprivation and baby spew isn’t making you see your spouse through rose-colored glasses, you might be right. “Dad will say I try to help but

she doesn’t like how I’m feeding the baby, how I’m diapering, what clothes I put on,” says Friedman.

Solution: Realize why you may have turned more critical of your partner, particularly if you were more laid-back pre-pregnancy: “It’s reflective of the mother’s stress. She unwittingly becomes overly critical.” Again, ask for specific help, close your eyes, and think about sending them away...to college.

Issue: Money Is Tighter Than Tight

In this economy a lot of families are struggling, and with multiples it can feel like your money woes are multiplied. For example: “At the doctor’s office you pay two co-pays,” says Meshberg-Cohen. And that’s not even counting double the medicine when they share bugs.

Solution: It’s unavoidable—kids are expensive and you’ll have to roll with the punches (to your wallet). “Every union will face real life-issues together, and regardless of the number of kids involved, both parents must work as a team to adapt and roll with things as they come,” says Flais. “When I was pregnant with each set, we worried about finances, but we found that you make it work with what you have,” says Glick.

Issue: You’re Just Not Getting Along

Even with a super husband, occasional help and a support group to call your own, the happiest marriages experience bumps in the road—multiples or no babies at all.

Solution: Besides firming up a sleep schedule so you’re not snapping out of fatigue, remember why you’re here in the first place—love. “At times, my husband and I take our tiredness or frustrations out on each other, but at the end of the day, we still respect and love each other and tell each other that,” says Glick. And if you need motivation to be cordial, think about who is listening. “Remember that your children look to Mom and Dad to learn about relationships and conflict resolution. They will witness that even when two people love each other very much, they will sometimes disagree—and what is most important for your kids to see is that Mom and Dad work together to resolve the problem and find a solution.” ♥

10 Tips on Building Self-Esteem

Continued from page 8

9 Look for ways to include your children.

Although you may be busy with many professional and domestic responsibilities, look for ways to include your children in some of them. For example, take each of your children with you to the grocery store, on a rotation basis, perhaps. If you are working on your car, ask one of your children if he would enjoy some instruction about automobile engines.

10 Keep your eyes open.

Take advantage of those times when you can give encouragement to help your multiples become more self-reliant. Simple tasks such as getting themselves dressed, making their own beds and washing their own hair are invitations that are uniquely yours to use in helping your children feel good about who they are and their abilities to take care of themselves. ♥

John Clark of Kansas City, Kansas, is a pastor and the father of five children, including twins.





Destination F-U-N

FANTASTIC FAMILY FUN SPOTS TO SEE!

by Christa D. Reed

Silver Dollar City Amusement Park

Located in Branson, Missouri



Nestled high up in the Ozark Mountains just outside of Branson, Missouri is truly a fantastic destination for any family looking for a mix of fun, thrills, shops, restaurants and entertainment at every turn. Silver

Dollar City Amusement Park is a 1880s-style theme park that began as a re-creation of the mining town that once stood at the mouth of Marvel Cave, which lies under the park. Now, the park encompasses more than 100 acres and attracts about two million visitors each year.

Silver Dollar City features 30 rides and attractions and is unveiling a brand new family area in 2015 that will be called **"Fireman's Landing"** which will feature 10 New Family Adventures. Last year, Silver Dollar City received the *Golden Ticket Award* (a poll conducted by *Amusement Today* magazine of well-traveled amusement park fans around the world) and was named the "Friendliest Park" in the entire theme park industry. The park was also voted as one of the top ten Best Parks in the world.

Silver Dollar City is a popular destination for families and offers a huge variety of options for guests visiting the park. A great added



bonus for summer visitors are that many of the pathways and areas of the park are under huge trees that offer shade on a hot summer day which provides a much more pleasant experience than typical theme parks. One downside, however, is that it is very confusing to find your way around the park because of the trees, all the hills and the way the park is set up. Many confused people were walking

around holding park maps and trying to determine where they were in the park.

As you enter through the main entrance after walking past several shops and eateries you then get to the area called **"Main Street"** which offers people a variety of eateries and shops like: Brown's Candy Factory, Fanny's Famous Funnel Cakes and a special place for demonstrations called Wilderness Road Blacksmith where visitors can see how craftsmen in the 1880s worked. Silver Dollar City actually showcases America's heritage crafts with a demonstrating colony of 100 resident craftsmen. Also located in the "Main Street" area is "The Gazebo" where a variety of world-class family entertainment is performed throughout the day.



After strolling through "Main Street" you have some decisions to make. You can walk through the area called **"Valley Road"** which features entertainment, shops, eateries and one of the more mild roller coasters in the park called Thundernation that even some of the younger kids (and even older folks) would enjoy. Also in this area of the park is the Train Depot where visitors can hop on board the Frisco Silver Dollar Line Steam Train. This steam train is a great way for families to take a relaxing break from the heat while also getting an overview of the entire theme park. The train takes you through each area and even provides some fun along the way when the train is stopped by real-life "outlaws" for a good old fashioned train robbery (all in good fun!)

You can head toward the area dedicated to smaller kids called **"The Grand Exposition"** which features rides like Elephant March, The Happy Frogs, The Ladybugs, The Royal Tea Party and a kids-size coaster called, "The Grand Exposition". This is a fun area and creates lots of thrills for kids 48" and under with fun rides, games and lots of smiles for the younger kids.

If you head over to the area called **"Hugo's Hill Street"** that is where you start to get a feel for some of the more "thrilling" rides the park



offers like: the multi-looping roller coaster WildFire, a fun water ride called The American Plunge, Fire in the Hole and of course the high-octane, explosive launch of the PowderKeg.

Most people who love a thrill leave that area only wanting more so

then they head over to **“Wilson’s Farm & Western Outskirts”** to experience the groundbreaking wood coaster called Outlaw Run, which features the world’s first and only double barrel roll on a wood coaster. In 2013, Outlaw Run won the Golden Ticket Award for ‘Best New Ride’ worldwide. Also in this area visitors can brave the GIANT Barn Swing, High Low Silos, and Farmer Wilson’s Milk Cow.

Visitors to the park can also experience the area of **“Riverfront”** where the family water ride Lost River of the Ozarks is located along with Tom and Huck’s Riverblast and numerous theaters and event venues, restaurants and eateries. Entertainment is featured in on-park theaters ranging in size from 150 seats to 4,000 seats, and 17 restaurants offer hearty meals and festival specialties.

Learn more about one of America’s favorite family theme-parks by visiting their website at: www.silverdollarcity.com.

IF YOU GO:

- Download and print out the park map before you get there to get a better idea of the park layout and also so you can see which areas in the park you want to visit first.
- Download their Mobile App which includes a locator map, ride times and show and event schedules! (www.silverdollarcity.com)
- There are (3) three parking options: Valet is \$25 and drops you off at the front entrance; Preferred is \$10 and gets you closer to the entrance but you can also catch a shuttle bus that takes you directly to the entrance or you can park in the free lots which are much further from the entrance but you can walk to one of two shuttle bus stops to take a shuttle bus to the main entrance.
- The park offers a special deal for people that may want to squeeze in a little more fun into their visit. If you enter the park after 3:00 PM with a paid admission ticket, you can return the next consecutive operating day for no additional charge! This may be great if your twins are on a specific schedule and often the park gets less crowded towards the evening hours. The park is open daily 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

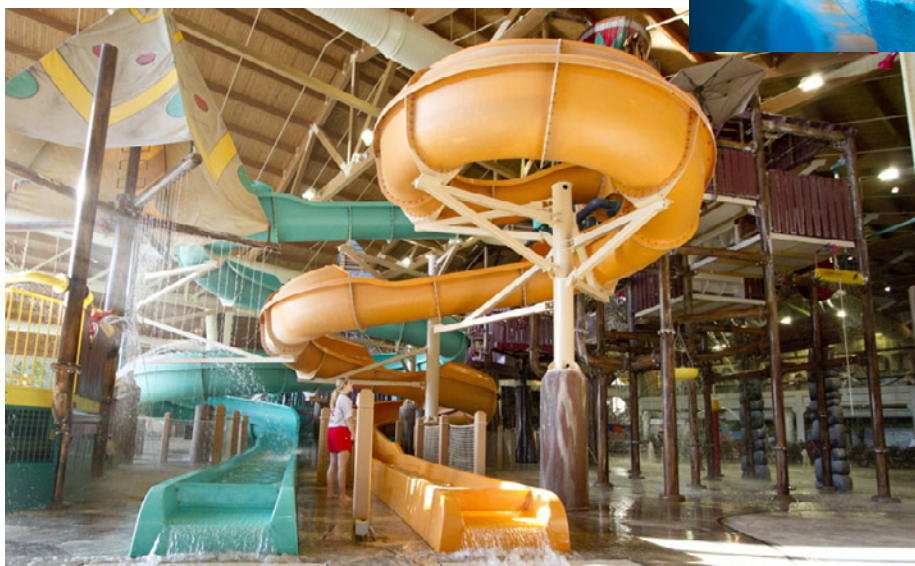
The Great Wolf Lodge

America’s Favorite Family Indoor Water Park Resorts!

Located across the US in the following cities:

Charlotte / Concord, NC
 Cincinnati / Mason, OH
 Grand Mound, WA
 Grapevine, TX
 Kansas City, KS
 New England / Boston, MA
 Niagara Falls, Ontario
 Pocono Mountains, PA
 Sandusky, OH
 So. California / Garden Grove, CA
 Traverse City, MI
 Williamsburg, VA
 Wisconsin Dells, WI

This summer, we had the pleasure of visiting our 2nd Great Wolf Lodge location, this time in Kansas City, Kansas. The kids absolutely love this indoor water park hotel which caters to kids and families and provides a variety of activities for the “cubs” in your life. At check-in each child receives their official Great Wolf Lodge “wolf ears” to wear if they give their very best “howl” and everyone is



also given a wrist-band for access to their indoor water park.

The massive, indoor water park is a ton of fun for everyone in the family. It features 38,000 square feet of water-packed excite-

ment, including water slides for thrill seekers like The “Howlin Wolf”, a 3-person toboggan-style ride winding 336 ft. throughout the water park; “Alberta Falls” a four story water slide that twists in and out of the Lodge





before dropping you into the plunge pool and “The Triple Twist” the first ride of its kind in the world that drops you into a huge funnel followed by twists, turns and two more funnels before splashing down.

The water park also offers zero-depth entry areas for little ones and “Fort Mackenzie”, a 4-story interactive tree house in the center of the water park. There are suspension bridges, swinging cargo nets, treetop slides and soaking spray stations. To get people really drenched, there is a 1,000-gallon bucket that tips from the treetops four times an hour. For the really tiny ones, there is a kiddie slide and area where they can safely toddle along, exploring the spray-and-play features, or wade into the zero-depth entry kiddie pool with a maximum depth of 1’6”.

There is also a pool for water basketball and kids can test their balance along a floating activity or try out “Big Foot Pass” an agility

challenge for kids to practice their balance. Little kids learn to jump from lily pad to lily pad, while the older ones use the netting above to guide them across. People can try out the lazy river, or take a dip into one of two huge hot tubs (one for adult-only and the other for families) and at this location an area called “Thunder Bay” which is a seasonal outdoor pool that includes water basketball, kiddie

activities, and water effects including floor geysers and spray features, as well as heated water.

We really enjoyed the nice, clean appointed hotel rooms because they were quite roomy and provided enough space and bedding for my family of six to all stay together in one room which was a huge bonus. The resort also provides several dining options from a snack bar located inside the water park to two different bar and grill locations, a “Sweets & Eats” shop and “Hungry Like a Wolf” café where after a long day of driving and enjoying the water park we ordered pizza for take-out and everyone enjoyed it.

Great Wolf Lodge gears everything to kids and families. Kids can get an ice cream-themed manicure in Scoops Kid Spa, play some games in the “Northern Lights Arcade”, or kids can also visit the “Cub Club” a kid

haven with activities and crafts designed to enlighten and entertain kids.

One thing we thought was really cool was a game kids could play called MagiQuest. With a magic wand in-hand, kids explore an enchanted kingdom in this live-action adventure game unlike any other I’ve seen. It has kids using their wand to enchant objects, befriend a pixie, learn from an ancient wizard, battle a goblin and outwit a dragon.

Another fun family activity Great Wolf Lodge offers families every night is when people gather together at the Great Clock Tower in the Grand Lobby for a very special ‘Story Time’ and appearance by Wiley the Wolf. My kids really enjoyed this and even got to get a photo with Wiley!

Although we didn’t get a chance to check it out, they also had an interactive, outdoor mini-golf

course called, “Howl in One” which features giant life-like beavers, golf ball-eating fish, and floating greens.



Learn more about the Great Wolf Lodge resorts by visiting their website: <http://www.greatwolf.com>

Another FUN Option:

The Adventuredome at Circus Circus Resort & Casino Located in Las Vegas, Nevada

If you want to experience Las Vegas with your family, one entertainment option is to take everyone to the Adventuredome, a 5-acre, indoor amusement park located inside the Circus Circus Resort and featuring 25 rides and attractions for people of all ages.

There are two high-adrenaline roller coasters one called “Canyon Blaster” the world’s only indoor double-loop, double-corkscrew roller coaster speeding through The Adventuredome at 55 mph. and their new “El Loco” roller coaster a very unique coaster that twists, turns and drops and then ascends 90 feet before dropping over and under to experience a 1.5 vertical-G. Other larger rides include the Sling Shot, Chaos, the Inverter and Disk-O. For little kids they have the Frog

Hopper, Thunderbirds, and a mini-coaster called Miner Mikes. Families can enjoy the B.C. Bus, a Circus Carousel, a hot-air balloon ride and an attraction called Road Runner. The amusement park also features a mini-golf course, laser-tag arena, Extreme 3-D theater, a mid-way with a ton of arcade games and much more!

The cost for admission is \$29.95 for an all-day pass for people 48 inches or taller and \$16.95 for a junior all-day pass for people under 48 inches. You can also purchase tickets for individual rides ranging from \$5 to \$10 per ride depending on which rides you want to experience. The park is open daily from 10:00 AM to midnight.

IF YOU GO:

- So you won’t have to pay full-price for an all-day pass, look for discount coupons throughout Vegas or on popular Vegas tourism websites.
- Try and book a room at another hotel. The hotel seemed run down and was filled with crowds of people. Walking through with our family was hectic with young kids and it was really confusing to get around the property. The rooms need to be updated and had a funny smell to them. Although it was convenient and the kids had fun at the Adventuredome, we wished we would have stayed at another hotel while in Vegas.
- Circus Circus offers the only campground on the strip! If you have an RV or Camper and are on a family road-trip, the campground at Circus Circus could be the way to go!



TRY THESE TWINS SHOP EXCLUSIVES....

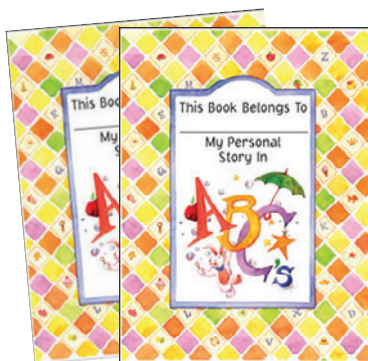
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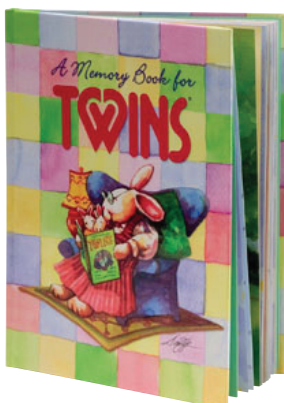
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Boy / Boy Twin Story Packet

Girl / Girl Twin Story Packet



Boy/Girl Twin Story Packet—Hello Twins, Two Times the Fun, Twenty Wiggly Toes, The Twins and the Birthday Party, His Sister, Her Brother, The Chairs Where Pam and Sam Sit. \$43.95

Boy / Girl Twin Story Packet



Tips for new Parents with Twins

An open letter from a twin!

by Marie Cash

Marie Cash As a recent college graduate, Marie has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Northern Colorado. She enjoys reading, writing and baking new recipes for her food blog. Marie has a fraternal twin named Kathy. They are best friends and both live in Colorado. Someday they want to attend the Twins Day Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio.



Dear New Mom and Dad of Twins:

Expecting twins for the first time? Parenting twins can be stressful, but it can also be one of the best experiences of your lives. I have a twin sister; we are fraternal twins. Twenty-one years ago, my parents found out they were expecting twins during the first ultrasound. It was quite the surprise for them! They were excited but also worried about having double of everything. My sister and I were born 11 weeks premature. Because of our early arrival, my parents had to quickly prepare for double the amount of baby clothes, the messes and the future expenses. But, there was also double the amount of fun and love that had to be provided.

Preparing for twins can be demanding, but it is important for parents to be ready when the twins arrive. Joan A. Friedman, a psychotherapist and twin expert from southern California, says parents can prepare for having twins by developing expectations

that are realistic. Parents will be busy and stressed, so they need to set some time aside to relax. Friedman says parents should work together to make parenting more efficient.

"Work out with your partner beforehand how you will attempt to help each other during these difficult early months," Friedman says.

To prepare for having twins, my parents also had realistic expectations. They knew that they would have to think about the little aspects, including buying enough diapers and balancing feeding times. My mother says the first few nights after my sister and I came home from the hospital, my father kept insisting that since he had to go to work the next day, he needed his sleep. My mother got up and fed both of us. But, when she fed us, she also woke my father up, so he didn't get much sleep anyway.

"What we ended up doing was both getting up and each feeding a baby, and then we went back to bed and slept until it was

time to feed the babies again. That worked much better than the first approach."

It is also important that parents know they can ask for help. Friedman says parents should not be afraid to ask others around them for help when caring for twins.

"Don't be reluctant as you will need extra laps and hands," Friedman says.

Ask a relative to help out with the twins once a week, or ask a friend to spend a few hours with one of the twins. My grandparents pitched in when they could even though they lived a few hours away. My mother says my grandma came to help right after we came home from the hospital. She also visited sometimes during the day to babysit, so my parents got a chance to eat out or go shopping.

There are also many useful resources for new parents, including books about twins, twins' clubs, pediatricians and talking with other parents who are raising twins. Friedman says new parents should not be hard on themselves; it is okay to feel overwhelmed sometimes. She says parents should do what they think is best when it comes down to their parenting style.

"It is about surviving and doing a good enough job, not a perfect one."

My parents talked to a pediatrician and found him to be very helpful. He was a twin himself, which added to his knowledge of twins. He gave my parents many tips about baby nutrition and tips on how to care for twins when both babies become sick.

"The family pediatrician, Dr. Stein, told us which medicines to give to the girls," says my mother. "He was especially helpful when you girls got pink eye multiple times."

Another key piece of advice is to expect that new parents will both be tired and overwhelmed at first. My parents created a schedule to balance different tasks.

"I would take out the trash and fill up the bottles, while Mom changed diapers and dressed the girls," says my father. "Although I was exhausted at first, it got easier once we figured out a routine."

According to The Twin Coach, a website created by Gina Osher, a mother of twins, new parents should stay calm and talk to other parents of multiples. By reaching out and conversing with other parents, parents can become more knowledgeable about twins and learn about ways to provide the best care for their twins. My family lived next door to twin boys who were four years older than we were. We became close with our neighbors, and my mother got a lot of free parenting advice from their mother.

In addition, Friedman says it is important to spend alone time with each twin in order to get to know him or her individually. As twins grow older, parents can see their differences and they can work to treat their twins as individuals.

My parents tried to treat my sister and me as individuals. As toddlers, my parents dressed us differently and encouraged us to spend time with other children.

KEY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF TWINS

- ✓ Remember to relax
- ✓ Talk to other parents of twins
- ✓ Fill your bookcase with twin books and utilize online resources (blogs, informational sites)
- ✓ It is ok to ask for help (family members and friends are willing to help you out!)
- ✓ Encourage individuality for your twins
- ✓ Consider joining a twins club (www.nomotc.org)
- ✓ Read Friedman's book *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children*.

"I wanted to make sure you girls were individuals with your own personalities and interests," says my mother. "But, at the same time, I wanted you to be friends and have a good relationship."

Friedman also says that parents cannot make their twins' lives completely equal.

"Don't get caught up in the fair and equal dilemma even though your twins attempt to guilt you into such a conundrum."

Parents try to make everything fair, but it is just not possible. Each twin has different personality traits and different wants as he or she grows older. Instead of making everything fair, parents should focus on encouraging each twin to live his or her own life, so everything does not seem like it has to be equal.

Nonetheless, twins become friends because they spend a lot of time with each other. My parents encouraged my sister and me to have a close relationship. The twin relationship is a special one that twins should foster. My twin sister and I have different interests, but we are also very close; we can talk about anything with each other.

Furthermore, Friedman says parents should not focus on the "twin mystique." By doing this, parents tend to idealize what it is to be a twin. She says that parents should take note of the pros and cons of parenting twins.

Friedman recommends parents read her first book, *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children*. Her book provides parents with information about pregnancy with twins and raising twins.

I hope this information will help you as you begin your journey of parenting twins. Having twins will bring you double the amount of joy and memorable experiences. My parents continue to learn about twins and make new memories, even after 21 years. ♥



Best wishes,

Marie Cash, a fraternal twin

Double Takes



1

River & Colten
Age 7-Months, FR
Hilton Head Island, SC



2

Kelan Luke & Arabella Grace
Age 23-months
FR, Louisville, KY



3

Ana & Zoe
Age 7-months old, FR
Florida Keys, FL



4

James & Jeremiah
Age 3, ID
Indianapolis, Indiana



5

Emma & Kris
Age 3 (in photo), FR
Slaughter, Louisiana



6

Amelia & Olivia
Age 1, ID
Roseville, CA



7

Braeden & Beckett
Age 4, FR
Ellensburg, WA



8

Ben & Mia
Age 3, FR
San Diego, CA

July/August 2014



9

Maliya & Maya
Age 3 ½, ID
Clifton, New Jersey



10

Jacks & Cole
Age 17-months
FR, Yokosuka, Japan



11

Ava & Oliver
Age 18-months, FR
Livermore, California



12

Nora & Lola
Age 9-months, FR
Richmond, IL



13

Brendan & Jayden
Age 7, FR
Colorado Springs, CO



14

Lillea & Jackson
Age 2, FR
Hazard, Kentucky



15

Jessenia & Dimalys
Age 1 ½, ID
Bethel, CT



16

Preston & Sawyer
Age 3 ½, FR
Fairhope, AL



17

Kayden & Avery
Age 10-months, FR
Lafayette, CO



18

Katelyn & Jocelyn
Age 4-months, FR
Frisco, TX



19

Ethan & Oliver
Age 11-months, ID
Edgewater, Florida

Double Takes



20

Charlotte & Logan
Age 3 ½, FR
Wakefield, MA



21

Madelyn & Brooklyn
Age 3-months, FR
Lake Houston in Kingwood, TX



24

Pierson & Lilia
Age 2, FR
Norfolk, VA



22

Kian and Xander
Age 9-months in photo, ID
Fredericton, New Brunswick,
Canada



23

Addie Pearl & Ricki Lee
Age 3 ½, FR
Jupiter, FL



25

Jayce & Kayden
Age 7-months, FR
Inez, Kentucky



26

Jaxson & Jayleigh
Age 20-months, FR
Dothan, Alabama



27

Addison & Anna
Age 4, FR
Birmingham, AL



28

Kai & Kasey
Age 5 ½, FR
Tucson, AZ



29

Molly & Olivia
Age 14-months, ID
Amite, Louisiana



30

Lucas & Tyler
Age 17-months, FR
Vidor, Texas

July/August 2014



31

Gabriella & Cameron
Age 4, FR
Lake Worth, FL



32

Ian & Zoë
Age 4, FR
Columbus, Ohio



33

Layla & Stella
Age 9-months, ID
Springfield, MO



34

Kevin & Corey
Age 10, ID
Martinsburg, WV



35

Addison & Jackson
Age 22-months, FR
Madisonville, Kentucky



36

Leighton & Violet
Age 2, ID
Clayton, NC



37

Caiden & Caison
Age 4, FR
El Campo, Texas



38

Cooper & Delaney
Age 16-months, FR
Anaheim Hills, CA



39

Karina & Karime
Age 4, ID
Dumas, TX



40

Payton & Riley
Age 3, FR
Lavaca, Arkansas



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