

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

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Surprise!
It's Twins!



**HAPPY 31st
BIRTHDAY
TO US!**

**Special "Twin
Birthday" Section**

**COPING WITH
CRYING & NOISE?**

Try These Noise Signals

**It's OK to Be
Overwhelmed!**

**It's Cold & Flu Season
Are You Ready?**

January/February 2015



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Meet Blaise Leon and Brooklyn Rose Moore, 6-year-old fraternal twins from Lakeport, California. Their personalities are as different as their looks! Blaise Leon enjoys building with Legos, and creating art. Brooklyn Rose loves to dance and make new friends. Both twins enjoy playing soccer, riding bikes and scooters and hiking. They are both excellent students and are in separate kindergarten classes. Mom Antoinette is very proud!

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Cover Photo taken by: Tiffany Ann Chavez owner and photographer at TAC photography located in Lakeport, California tac.photos@facebook.com and <http://www.tacyoursup.com>

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HAPPY 31ST BIRTHDAY TO US!!

Have you ever heard of the parenting quote about raising children... **"Parenting doesn't get easier, it just gets better?"** Although shocking and certainly hard to believe, my twin boys will be 17 next month and my two younger sons, age 12 and 7 have all given me real reason to firmly believe this statement as fact. Think about it... this is a fantastic and amazing statement! It's a proclamation that we should all hold dear, a mantra we should all live by, a motivational statement we should tell ourselves each and every day... especially during those unfortunate times when we aren't at our "perfect Pinterest, parenting best!"

You see... parenting does not get easier, BUT... it does get better. Just when you think you have mastered one age and stage; they move onto the next one and you're off, having to adjust and learn a new way to handle the hurdles and challenges that inevitably will come your way. All of the issues that arise are not easier to deal with (like wiping poop off the walls after they ripped off their diapers and threw them until they stuck issue); but these challenges just gets better as you go... trust me... MUCH better than that!

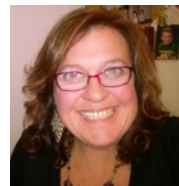
Whether you are pregnant with your twins and need information about what to expect, you're in the thick of midnight feedings, colic and teething or you're preparing your twins for potty training, all of these parenting milestones are as important for them as they are for us.

You do feel such a sigh of relief and a huge sense of accomplishment when they begin to crawl, walk, talk and feed themselves. Each age and stage you learn more about your parenting style and you get to know your children and who they really are. This is not easier, either, but it IS... better.

When you are met with a challenge and face it head-on, you will find that you are much more confident and capable at parenting and ready to tackle anything, especially when your friends with singletons look at you in 'awe'. As they move through each stage so will you! So, when you think that this difficult phase they are in will 'never' pass, it will, and please remember: parenting doesn't get easier, it just gets better.

Speaking of getting better with age... 2015 marks TWINS Magazine's 31st year of being the world-leading resource for everything relating to having and raising twins, triplets and higher order multiples! We hope you enjoy our "Birthday-themed" issue with some fantastic ideas and tips on ways to throw the best birthday parties for twins, we share the hidden surprises with twin birthday parties, and our readers share their best ideas for all twin-types and so much more!

Thank you all for your continued loyalty and support for our magazine, website and social media pages! We are so thrilled that our social media following is growing substantially each day and we have now hit the 75,000 fan mark on Facebook! Without you supporting our magazine by subscribing, engaging in conversation through social media and sharing your stories with us over the years, we would not have survived the past three decades! Having multiples is a special and amazing experience... having others to share it with is priceless!



Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa Reed,
Editor-in-Chief



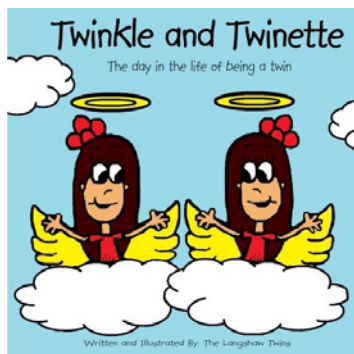


The International Twins Association's 81st Annual Convention will take place in Orlando, Labor Day Weekend 2015!

Save the date and make your plans to bring the family to the ITA's 81st Annual Convention taking place September 4-6, 2015 at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando, FL. Special convention rates apply (Single or Double occupancy rates: \$89 + tax per room, per night / Family rate: Children 17 & under are FREE!) be sure to visit the ITA website on how to get this rate! Trips to Disney, Kennedy Space Center; Golfing; Silent Auction, Twins Contest and new to the convention this year is a fun FAMILY event for twins and triplets of ALL AGES & more! Want more information on how to attend this twin's convention? Visit <http://intltwins.org/index.php/en/convention-info>

The Langshaw Twins Write New Children's Book about Twins Called, "TWINKLE & TWINETTE"!

Dana and Grace Langshaw are 21-year-old identical twin models and actresses based in Cleveland, Ohio. The Langshaw twins have co-written and illustrated a brand new children's book called Twinkle and Twinette which points out the fun, the silly and the common questions that come with being a twin. The book was created while they were waiting long hours on movie sets like last November when they filmed a feature role as "Twin Supermodels" in Fast and The Furious 7 in Atlanta.



These talented twins both graduated two years early from The Ohio State University with bachelor's degrees in Strategic Communications in May 2013 in order to pursue their modeling and acting career. Since college they have traveled to Florida, Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago and currently they live on and off in a model house in New York City together. They have also walked in shows for designers in New York Fashion Week and Miami Swim Week 2013

and 2014.

You may have also seen these twins on television shows such as Young, Hot and Crooked on the Investigation Discovery Channel and on WWE Raw and Smackdown on USA and SyFy as twin rosebuds for the wrestler, Adam Rose. These dynamic ladies also give everyone a "double take" in the hockey arena as 3rd year cheerleaders for the NHL Columbus Blue Jackets which they very much enjoy. They also do local commercials and films around the Ohio area. Recently, they returned home after living in NYC as Twin Hair Models for an As Seen on TV infomercial modeling a hair straightener and were the featured models of The Little Black Dress Collection by Simply Intricate.

The future looks bright for these two and we will be sure to follow their career wherever that takes them! To learn more about Dana & Grace visit their website at www.langshawtwins.com.



Dear TWINS:

These pictures are very special to me because both of my twins have autism. Vincent is the red headed guy. He has Asperger's and does not like to be touched and has a hard time recognizing other people's feelings. However, he loves waterfalls and as a treat we visit Croton water fall and on this day, I let the boys climb the stairs. They feel like it's a castle. Dominick got very scared and Vincent came down and said I'll help you and extended his hand. I cried as I took these pictures. It was a milestone for him. His hand showed empathy for his brother and actually talked him through his fear up and down. He had never done this before. So while it might not scream love to some it screams it around the world and back again for me and many other parents of children with autism. I hope you share their picture and story for inspiration to those struggling with autism. There is always hope always love and always award winning moments for us!!!



My beautiful twins Dominick and Vincent

Thank you,
Dawnmarie Nasi, Via email

Hi Twins Magazine!

I am sending this email to introduce you to our new online boutique - Sunshine Tienda. Sunshine Tienda is an online boutique that was started by Texas based and identical twins, Laura and Amanda Ernst, to inspire the peace of vacation with the goods of the world. Sunshine Tienda is a curation of hand selected jewelry, accessories and home goods reflecting a vacation lifestyle from artisans around the world. Our hope is to arouse a sense of worldly curiosity in our shoppers; if they love what they see, maybe they'll be encouraged to search the world for their own treasures. Brilliant colors, patterns, and aesthetics launched this site-o-sunshine on Thanksgiving Day. Please visit www.sunshinetienda.com



Warm Regards,
Laura & Amanda Ernst
Sunshine Tienda

In Remembrance of Todd Rickenbach

April 7, 1969 to December 23, 2014

We would like to take this opportunity to celebrate and honor the life of one of our former twin cover models and a good friend to TWINS Magazine. Todd Rickenbach, a former professional airline pilot, took his final flight in the early morning of December 23rd with his family at his side after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Todd's identical twin brother, Rodd, also a professional airline pilot, was always by his twin brother's side. Just like any close twin would be... Rodd would take Todd to his cancer treatments (often by plane), would constantly make time to be by his side and would cherish every moment they had together...even until the very end.

Todd was born on April 7, 1969 to Robert and Sharon Rickenbach arriving just seven minutes after his identical twin brother Rodd. Todd knew from his childhood that he wanted to be a pilot and he began flying lessons with his friend and flight instructor Terri Haynes while he was still in high school. He convinced his brother Rodd that flying would be a great career for the both of them and Todd and Rodd completed flight training at Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, OK. Todd then returned to Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree graduating in the same class as his Mother in December 1994. Todd continued his career in various positions including aerial predator control, crop dusting, and air ambulance. He eventually took a position as a First Officer at American Eagle Airlines in 1998 in where he flew in the Dallas, TX base. He upgraded to Captain in 2000 and was



assigned to the Boston, MA crew base. Todd finally realized his dream of flying large passenger jets when he was hired by Frontier Airlines in January of 2001. He upgraded to Captain on the Airbus A320 in 2003 and flew for Frontier until his illness forced him into early retirement in late 2009. In 2008, TWINS Magazine was honored to feature Todd & Rodd on our cover as identical twin airline pilots and we also did a story about their "identical" careers!

Todd's colleagues remember him as an excellent pilot, mentor, and friend. A cancer diagnosis did not stop Todd from living his life

to the fullest. Todd is remembered for his smile, positive attitude, and willingness to help others in spite of his own illness. While receiving treatment Todd remained active, spending time golfing with this wife, Michele, and his friends. Most mornings were spent having coffee with friends and the rest of day was generally spent at the local Airport working on and flying his Cessna 180 with his twin brother and fellow pilot friends.

When a twin loses a co-twin, it can be the greatest loss any human can endure. Our hearts are heavy and our thoughts are with all those that loved Todd, and especially to Rodd...we send him strength, love, peace and courage to live his life

to the absolute fullest even without his beloved twin. We know that someday they will once again be together as twins... someday!

Visit <http://www.twinlesstwins.org/> for information and resources dedicated specifically for twins that have suffered a loss of a twin!



Having Kids is Easy...

Having Twins is Even Easier!

by Erin Randall

This essay was driven by a great deal of sarcasm so please take what I say lightly because it's how it was meant to be taken. Everyone warned me about how tough parenting would be but I just didn't understand the scope of it all until I actually had my babies and set out on my own journey as mommy. I can definitely say I love being a twin-mom.

IT'S EASY...

- To stay up or get up at ungodly hours of the night. Currently, a combination of six molars coming through and six immunization/flu shots are causing the extra quality time I get with the kiddos.
- Because the kids can now clean up their own mess. Given they can put away one toy out of a million, but it's all about the positive direction they're moving towards, right? Yea...right!
- Because I never knew how much tolerance and patience I could muster. Deep breaths...Over and over and over again!
- Because they are superheroes. Yep, they must have been bit by a radioactive spider because they now scale walls. Seriously, picture frames and paintings are coming down. I swear there's a peanut butter and jelly handprint on the ceiling. Maybe I'll just chalk this one up to, 'My kids are advanced'. ha!
- Because they feed off each other. It's adorable when they are laughing and having fun which is the majority of the time. Then there's the 180 degrees of laughter. Like the celestial symphony of screaming and crying in the doctor's office. Long waiting periods in a maxi-germ infested room, perfect for the wailing acoustics to be propelled throughout the entire office. The nurse actually told me the whole office could hear my kids, thank you for letting me know. I will note that in the baby book and make sure I bring earplugs for all the pediatric staff next visit. I can't blame the kids howling after six shots, two pricks to their toes, strangers touching them, etc... That was only one appointment this week. I can't even talk about the cardiologist visit...I'm still having nightmares after that, oh, so lovely two hour appointment
- Because boys and girls are different (at least mine are)! There's Avery, sitting quietly reading books, and here comes Kayden with a drum hitting her over the head. Nope, not a drumstick, a drum. At least he's thinking big. It's easy to tell a one year old boy to be 'soft'. Easy to now have to soothe an out-of-her mind wailing and possibly bruised daughter. Easy!

- If I were split in two. This way K&A couldn't run in opposite directions without constant supervision. Instead, I believe they move like ninjas planning against Mommy. One is the distractor and the other is the destructee. I can only go after one...50% chance I can catch the culprit. May the force be with me!
- Because they can open just about everything that says, (childproof). It's a huge help to me since I have the darnedest time opening anything childproof. Thanks kids for helping mommy open the cabinet!
- To suck down caffeine in droves and need more!
- To lie to them. Yep, I lie to my kids on a regular basis. They are always winning but, I will never allow them to think that! I will tell them, I win every time. I know the moment I show weakness they will eat me alive. Mommy...Winning! Of course, I will stop lying at a point in their lives and back off so we can have a more friend-like relationship. Maybe when they are teenagers. I hear that's a cakewalk.
- To be a parent!
- To be driven insane times two!
- To deeply love them even though they are 'on a thin line' as I tell them. Yep, they completely understand what that means.
- To have two more cute babies. (Just kidding Taylor). No, really, just kidding!!

It's all easy! And it's practically just begun... ♡





Training Kids

by Dave Couch



We wish as parents that our kids will always respect us, listen to our hard won advice, and do the chores quickly and on time. It all comes down to the training you give your children, passing on all your accumulated knowledge in a thoughtful, straightforward manner. Plans are made for babies prior to their arrival, their development all charted out; starting from the first day babies arrive at home.

We now know this is all a crock. Most of us had no idea what to do with the squirming little munchkins when we got home from the hospital. We flew by the seat of our pants, handling things on the fly and trying to keep up with the changes in our home life (*i.e. lack of sleep*). Get advice from our parents and grandparents? Sure, if you could remember your name from day to day, you might even remember to ask them what the heck was coming next. If they were honest with you, they would tell you "Hang on, you stay just as busy, but in a different way".

If they were sympathetic, they wouldn't laugh outright at your questions. That little jig they do when your back is turned will be the same dance you do when your kids have kids.

I started training my kids actively when they were just newborns, by accident. With twins, there was no chance of me getting away without helping with the feeding, changing, holding, etc. My darling wife would finish feeding one then I would burp and change the first while she was working on the second. By the time I would put the first to sleep, the second would be ready and my wife would head to bed while I chanted softly into their ears, "Burp for me, burp for me, burp for me, kiddo". Life in the fast lane at four in the morning let me tell you.

About a year later, I was feeding the kids' breakfast, one at each end of the table in their highchairs, me shuttling back and forth with the curvy spoons full of porridge. Somewhere in the conversa-

tion with my wife, one of us said "burp". It was probably me. After all, it's a guy thing. Anyway, as I was trying to feed my daughter, she looked at me and said, "Aaacck". Blinking twice, I tried to feed her again when my wife said "What's with your son" (He's always my son when he's doing something questionable — which is appropriate, if truth be told). I looked over at the boy and he was straining to get something out of his mouth. He paused and tried again, mouth wide open and pushing air out. All of a sudden they stopped and motioned for more porridge. My wife and I looked at each other with fear in our eyes, suddenly realizing we had two alien creatures in our midst. Do we call 911 or the local exorcist? They don't cover stuff like this in pre-natal class.

Just before the panic of the unknown set in, it came to me in a flash. I said, "Burp for me, kids" and again my daughter lets out a hearty "Aaacck" and my son tries his best to let a ripper go. Unbelievable and more to the point, more fun than a barrel of monkeys! Everywhere I went with the kids, I had to show off their talents like every good father does. I got a free round of beer from the Fire Chief but a dirty look from his wife. The butcher had a great laugh and complemented me on how talented the kids were becoming. I got the cold shoulder and rolled eyes from the cashier lady, but it didn't matter.

I now knew that I was going to be alright — children were trainable, and I had trained mine without even knowing. If that isn't perfection, nothing is. ♥

Dave Couch spent 26 years in Public Safety before becoming a Technical Writer. He then wanted to do something fun for himself so he now writes a bi-weekly column for his local weekly newspaper reminiscing about all the interesting things he has experienced in his life. He has three kids, including a set of boy/girl twins, now nineteen years old and a seventeen year old son.



Sledding Safely

12 Tips to Keep Injuries at Bay

An activity synonymous with winter, thousands of children enjoy sledding outside each year. Whether you travel to the slopes to get your fix of wintry fun or have a plethora of powder in your own backyard, the joys of speeding down a hill on a sled can make it easy to forget that these activities can also lead to injuries. Taking a few simple safety precautions can help keep you and your children secure this winter.

Sledding injuries vary in their severity with cuts, bruises and broken bones being the most common injuries sustained. Most injuries occur either when a sled hits a stationary object or when a child falls off of a moving sled. Head and neck injuries, more common among children 6 years old and younger, are also possible when sledding.

While the idea of your child being injured during a day of sledding can be worrisome for parents, keep from putting a damper on the fun by following these twelve easy safety rules:

- 1.** Insist that children have an adult with them when they go sledding. Older children can go sledding in groups but should not be responsible for supervising much younger siblings.
- 2.** Make sure that all children are dressed in warm clothes, preferably in layers, and that they are wearing gloves and boots to protect their hands and feet.
- 3.** Always insist that young children wear a helmet to prevent head injuries. Both multi-sport and bicycle helmets are good choices for sledding. Helmets should fit securely and not slide around on the top of the child's head.

- 4.** Always go down the hill feet first. Headfirst may seem fun and adventurous but feet first lessens the risk of injury.
- 5.** Allow only the recommended number of passengers on the sled at one time.
- 6.** Be sure that you teach children how to stop and turn the sled by using their feet.
- 7.** As a general rule, sleds that can be steered are safer than flat sheets, snow discs and toboggans.
- 8.** Do not sled in the street or on another roadway.
- 9.** Avoid sledding on driveways, hills, or slopes that end in a street, drop off, parking lot, river or pond.
- 10.** Never ride a sled that is being pulled by a car, truck or other motorized vehicle.
- 11.** Avoid sledding in areas with trees, fences and light poles or on rocky hills.
- 12.** Because they are hard to steer, tubes are best used in a tubing park at a ski resort and not in a residential or unregulated area.

Follow these easy sledding safety rules and your kids will be dashing through the snow with smiles on their faces.

Beth N. Davis writes from Silver Spring, MD where she and her husband are raising their four children. Beth prefers to watch the sledding fun from a nearby window with a good cup of hot cocoa in hand.

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PREGNANCY

The Extra Precautions to Take While Pregnant with Multiples

by Dr. Charles Bowers

Dr. Charles Bowers worked in the medical field for over 30 years and is a OB/GYN who now works as a medical forensic evaluator at Ross Feller Casey, LLP. Dr. Bowers has previous experience with multiple pregnancies and births.

You always want to take safety precautions when you're pregnant, especially when you're pregnant with multiples. Because of the specific needs and risks associated with carrying more than one child, there are several extra precautions that expecting moms should take. What are those extra steps? How do you know if you're doing (or not doing) everything you should? To help answer these questions, here is a look at some of the best protective measures you can take when expecting multiples.



- 1. Eat More:** Women carrying multiples typically require more calories than women who are carrying just one baby. So if you're feeling hungry, eat! A good rule of thumb is to add 300 calories a day for each baby, says Baby Center. For the greatest health benefits, focus on nutrient-dense foods that can fuel your babies' growth — dairy products, meat, nuts, oils, eggs, fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains.
- 2. Rest a Lot:** Everyone knows pregnant women should rest, but this is especially true for pregnant women carrying multiples. Carrying additional children means additional work for your body, so it will need additional rest to keep working well. Make time for naps and listen to your body when it's tired.
- 3. Focus on Gentle Exercise:** If you have the green light from your care provider, exercising during pregnancy with multiples can be beneficial. Make sure you stick to gentle exercises that don't put pressure on your cervix and don't raise your body temperature too high. Good options are walking, swimming, prenatal yoga and riding a recumbent bicycle.
- 4. Get Extra Iron:** Women who are carrying multiples may be at a higher risk for anemia, so along with taking prenatal vitamins and any required medications, be sure to get iron-rich foods in your diet. Eat lots of salads, leafy vegetables and other foods that are naturally rich in iron to help your body and your babies grow as they should.
- 5. Research:** One of the best ways to protect your growing children is by being informed. Read TWINS Magazine books about carrying/expecting multiples, and ask your care provider questions about what

you can expect throughout pregnancy and delivery. The more you know, the better you can prepare — and the less intimidating the entire process becomes.

- 6. Expect More Medical Appointments:** Typically speaking, women who are pregnant with multiples will spend more time visiting their doctors than women expecting single children. There often will be more ultrasounds, more checkups and more risk evaluation throughout your pregnancy. Welcome this extra care as a way to monitor your babies carefully and protect them from harm.
- 7. Pay Close Attention to Complications:** Warning signs such as bleeding, vaginal discharge, early contractions or pelvis pressure are all reasons to talk to your care provider, even more so when you're pregnant with multiples. Because the risks are higher in your pregnancy, it's vital that you communicate quickly about any potential problems that arise.
- 8. Ask for Help:** When carrying multiple babies, you will likely require even more help than the typical pregnant woman, and that's true both during pregnancy and after the babies arrive. Reach out to family and friends about ways they can help, and don't be afraid to delegate! Your body has enough to handle with the little ones inside.

In addition to the tips above, be sure to follow the standard guidelines for all healthy pregnancies, such as drinking plenty of water, avoiding toxins and eating a well-balanced diet. By taking the right steps during pregnancy, you give your babies a jump-start on health even before they are born. ♥

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Coping With Crying & Noise!

by Sandy Jones

USE
THESE
NOISE
SIGNALS

Sandy Jones is a psychologist and the author of four books including 'Crying Baby, Sleepless Nights.'



Babies and toddlers speak their minds through screaming and crying. Don't scream back! Learn how to read their minds to interpret their needs using "noise" signals.

Nancy Fielding, mother of 2-month-old twins, Jeffrey and Jenna, looks harassed and tired these days. "Just when I get one baby settled down, the other one starts crying," she regularly moans.

Fielding is experiencing what could be labeled "crying baby stress syndrome," a kind of parent burnout especially common in parenting twins. It comes from constantly monitoring and responding to baby noises to the point of parental exhaustion. Like most mothers of twins, Fielding will soon learn how to interpret baby noises—which to respond to and which to ignore.

Research had shown that even the most experienced mothers and fathers can't interpret babies' crying beyond basic messages like hunger, pain, or rage. When carefully trained researchers listened to tape-recorded cries of babies, they guessed a baby's reasons for crying only 60% of the time. Studies have found that mothers and fathers can interpret the three for four reasons behind their babies' cries with 90% accuracy.

Babies crying have always been hard for some people to tolerate; now research is documenting why crying is so stressful. In the *New England Journal of Medicine*, reporter Dr. Bruce Bostrom shared the results of tests on the loudness of babies' cries. A baby's cry recorded six inches from his mouth registers between 100 and 117 decibels, which is louder than a car horn measured at the usual distance of 16 feet. It is 30 times louder than adult conversation and only a few decibels less loud than a pneumatic jack hammer. Multiply the intensity and loudness of baby crying by two and you have a real noise problem on your hands!

With the help of computers, scientists have been able to use recorded cries to analyze their usefulness in diagnosing hidden neurological problems in babies. It is known, for instance, that many premature babies have high-pitched, intense cries. Some researchers believe that there may be a connection between the irritating nature of premature infants' cries and the unusually high incidence of child abuse among this population.

WHAT MAKES MY BABIES CRY?

Although it may take practice, most parents can interpret their twins' noise signals. For example, if the babies have been asleep for several hours and wake up crying, some parents know that means the children are hungry. If they've been up for several hours and begin to fuss or bat at their ears, children may be trying to tell Mom and Dad it's nap time, according to some parents.

When a baby wakes his parents in the middle of the night with shrill screams, they may suspect pain is from a string of his sleeper wrapped around his little toe, or from a bubble of gas trapped in a loop of his intestines.

A baby's hunger cries usually begin as rhythmical, short cries followed by a pause to catch his breath before another cry begins. Some babies mouth their fists or suck on their fingers at the first signs of hunger.

Breastfed babies usually get restless and 'hyper' when it's feeding time, make whining noises, and nuzzle at the mother's chest. It's not unusual for breastfed babies to have sieges when they appear to want to nurse more than normal. This may be caused by the onset of illness or the beginning of a growth spurt. According to scientists, hunger cries quickly turn into pain cries when left unanswered.

A twin's unique personality affects why he cries. One twin may be mellow and rather patient about waiting to be fed or picked up, while the other may be unstable, quick to cry and unable to soothe himself well. While some babies love to be held and rocked others hate too much touching.

Sometimes the uncuddly or 'skin sensitive' baby has an immature nervous system that can't tolerate incoming stimulation. These babies need repetitive soothing strategies that last long enough to 'bore' their overly irritated nervous systems.

Very young babies don't have good temperature regulation mechanisms; this often causes them to cry fiercely when their diapers are changed or they are being bathed. One useful hint is to bathe them under a warm receiving blanket with a warm wash cloth rather than stripping them down and putting them in a tub.

Similarly, young babies often get upset by abrupt handling, sudden noises, or light changes. It's wise to handle babies in a fun, slow manner.

BABY-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES

All babies need to be physically close to their parents; the most potent baby soothing techniques are those that involve closeness and motion. Putting a baby on one's shoulder often interrupts crying. Rocking or wrapping each one firmly in a receiving blanket so that his arms and legs are restrained (swaddling) works well to ease fussiness, too.

By the time babies are 3-months-old they may fuss and cry simply because they are bored or because they miss keeping track of you visually. This is a good age for using up-right baby seats so the twins can be moved from room to room to watch what you are doing.

By 8-months of age, most babies cry when they are approached by strangers or left with babysitters. It appears that nature has built in this wariness as a protective mechanism at the very time when babies are most likely to be crawling around and getting into trouble.

If the babies are extraordinary fussy, they should be examined by a doctor to rule out milk allergies, hernias, urinary tract infections or a hidden infection in their inner ears.

Some babies may have colic, a term used for a mysterious form of baby fussiness that gets worse at sundown and usually disap-

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pears by the time babies are about 3-months of age.

Baby illnesses can also cause excessive crying. A few hours after immunizations or during an illness, babies will probably begin to get feverish and fretful. Signs of babies' illnesses are flushed, red faces; unusual paleness and circles under their eyes; and foreheads that feel hot to parents' lips. Breastfed babies often want to nurse more when a virus is coming on. Fussy bottle-fed babies may need extra water supplements because of the high sodium in formulas (always check with your doctor first, though!)

TODDLER NOISE

As babies mature, crying episodes usually subside and become replaced by toddler noise. Banging on toys, hitting, screaming, biting and tears—all are a normal part of high-energy toddler life.

Giving tots enough opportunities for outdoor exercise and play is a critical way to siphon off toddler noise and tensions. Don't be afraid of getting them out in damp or cold weather. Swedish mothers keep their tots and babies out almost all day, on the belief that fresh air keeps their babies healthier. Tots who have had this outdoor exposure

appear to be more robust and rosy-cheeked than those constantly kept indoors.

Coping with noise sometimes takes ingenuity, like removing the small plastic strip on the back of wheeled toys to eliminate its irritating, clacking sound. Practical decorating can sometimes help lessen the irritation of toddler noise. For example, using full-length drapes in the babies' room or installing a colorful fabric canopy that covers the room's ceiling are some ways to contain noise. Carpeting can also help lessen the sounds of running feet and rolling walkers or trucks. Radio stations often use cardboard egg cartons to line walls as a way of muting sounds.

Parents who live in apartments can get together and set up a basement playroom containing a sliding board, big blocks and other sturdy play equipment for rainy and snowy days. Also, tots may be enrolled in an exercise and swim program, or in special toddler gym classes.

Parents must not forget to meet their own human needs for a respite from baby crying or toddler noises. If possible, they should set aside one afternoon or night out a week for their own "time-off" from the strenuous and often loud work of caring for children. . ♥



Toddlers Need Us to Be Firm, But Gentle

by Janet Gonzalez-Mena



Janet Gonzalez-Mena

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

A little girl ended up with a dislocated elbow when her father tried to keep her from running out into the street. It wasn't his fault. He was trying to protect her, but when he grabbed her arm and jerked her back, the tendons gave. He had no idea that would happen. He felt terrible.

I've heard two stories like that one. The second was from a friend who was a preschool teacher. She was crossing a street with her own children, toddler twins, when the light changed. Her son held back, and she jerked his arm out of desperation

as she saw the wall of cars roaring down on them in the distance. His little arm came out of its socket.

This sort of thing happens because we aren't always told how fragile children are. In fact, we are told just the opposite. I remember a pediatrician showing me how to turn over a newborn baby. He was trying to prove that kids are tough. He did the turning by taking an arm and a leg and flipping my startled son from back to front. My son was horrified; I was horrified! I still am, even at the memory.

If we were told clearly that children can be hurt when we treat them roughly, many parents would stop shaking their little ones when they want them to pay attention, for example.

I think one of the problems is that we don't understand the concept of being firm and gentle at the same time. I know I didn't. I thought firm and rough went together. Soft and gentle had to do with giving—the opposite of standing firm.

HOW SHOULD PARENTS BEHAVE?

Sometimes it's appropriate to be soft and giving. Other times it's important to be firm—hard and unyielding. However, it's always appropriate to be kind and gentle, whether in the hard or soft mode.

My opening examples were accidents. The parents weren't angry, only afraid for their children. But an even bigger problem is when parents injure their children because they are angry with them. Unfortunately, it happens all the time. As a general term, "child abuse" is the label given to injuries that occur as a result of parental anger. Why do caring parents need to be aware of the effects that parental anger can have on their children? Read on!

Advice like "be kind and gentle" sounds insane in the face of parental rage. Who can remember that advice or anything else when children draw parents to the very ends of their limits? The problem of parental rage usually begins about the time babies grow into toddlers and develop "minds of their own." There's no stage when gentle firmness is more called for, yet it's one of the hardest times to give it. Toddlers know how to push parental buttons and get a reaction. Parents have to be ultra-patient and gentle, yet it's almost impossible to do so with toddlers in the house. Difficult or not, gentleness is a mandate; to be any other way is to put children at risk for abuse.

I believe that every parent has the potential for being a child abuser. It's normal and natural to get angry enough to cause injury. In my opinion, parents need to recognize and accept that fact and then take steps to protect themselves and their children from the results of potential rage. My message then may seem to be somewhat paradoxical. I'm saying to acknowledge your rage,

MAKING “NICE” WITH YOUR INNER-DRAGON

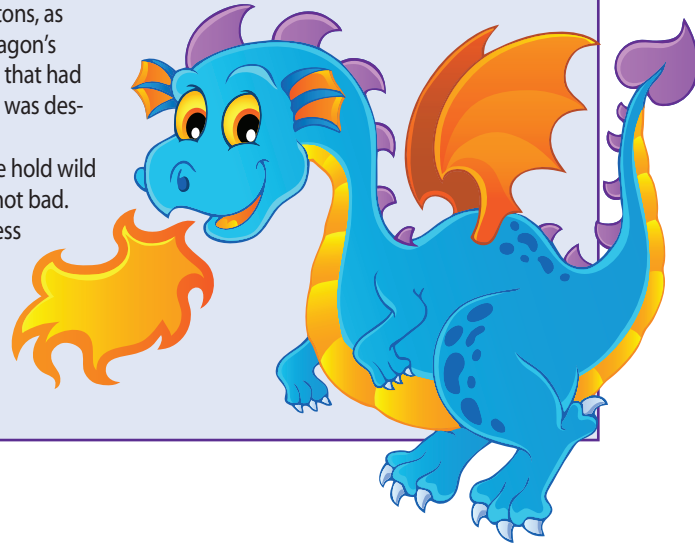
Parental anger is a problem for everybody. I’m no exception. I know my rage well; I see it as a “mean old dragon” that lives inside me. I can value being kind and gentle all I want, but that’s not my “dragon’s” style at all. She’s wild and refuses to be tamed. As I introduce you to that side of me, let your imagination run free while you picture what my “dragon” monster does.

One way adults help children overcome their fear of monsters that appear in their dreams is to suggest that the little ones “feed the monster”. It’s surprising how far nurturing can go—whether it’s used to tame dream monsters, children or ourselves. The key to calming wild energy is acceptance, love and understanding your own strengths and weaknesses—what makes you vulnerable to losing self-control.

Before I understood that concept, I tried keeping my internal “dragon” in check as a protective measure. But keeping her under “lock and key” didn’t work. My children are too good at picking locks, pressing my “hot” buttons, as many people call it. They learned that skill in their toddler years. As a result, the dragon’s “cage door” was continually coming open and then I was faced with a raging beast that had never been socialized. She didn’t know how to behave out of her cage. Naturally, I was desperate to control this wild energy.

I think it’s important for us to be gentle with ourselves even as we accept that we hold wild energy. As I got to know the “dragon mom” in me, I discovered that at heart she’s not bad. In fact, she has some amazingly wonderful qualities, including a fierce protectiveness where her offspring are concerned.

So I’m wondering on being firm but gentle with that mean old “dragon” in me. She’s wild, raw energy that needs nurturing and guidance. I’m learning to give it to her, just as I’ve learned to give the same to my children. Firm but gentle—that’s my motto. I’m learning to be my own best friend.



but don’t abuse your children. Is it possible to have it both ways at once? Yes, here are some hints about how to do so:

- ➔ When anger strikes, consider putting yourself in a “time-out” instead of your children.
- ➔ As a preventive measure, meditate. Give yourself periods of silence on a regular basis. Breathe deep and long. Count your breaths. Don’t do or think anything for a period of time each day.
- ➔ Meet your needs. As the flight attendant always says, ‘put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others.’ How can you meet your children’s needs if you neglect yourself? A parent with many unmet needs is a breeding ground for parental rage.
- ➔ Go beyond basic needs and ‘baby’ yourself whenever you possibly can. You need nurturing, too. You’re a very good source for your own nurturing. After all, who knows better than you what makes you happy? Take a bath or a walk or make yourself a delicious meal or snack. Do what you like doing and do it regularly.
- ➔ Get out in nature. Smell the air, hear the birds and feel the dirt and grass under your feet. Get outside every day.

As I wrote each of the previous suggestions, I could almost hear parents of multiples protesting: How can I possibly do all that? I don’t have the time or the opportunity!

To avoid the parenting pitfall of feeling like you have no time to yourself, try these suggestions:

- Seek support and backup whenever you can find it.
- Don’t try to tough it out until your children grow up.
- Seek out resources to help you and use them.
- Don’t try to do everything yourself, no matter how much you value your independence.
- Don’t be ‘super mom’ or ‘super dad’. Know your limits of stress and responsibility.

If you have toddlers, it’s essential that you deal with your parental frustration and maintain a sense of self-discipline in positive ways. ♥

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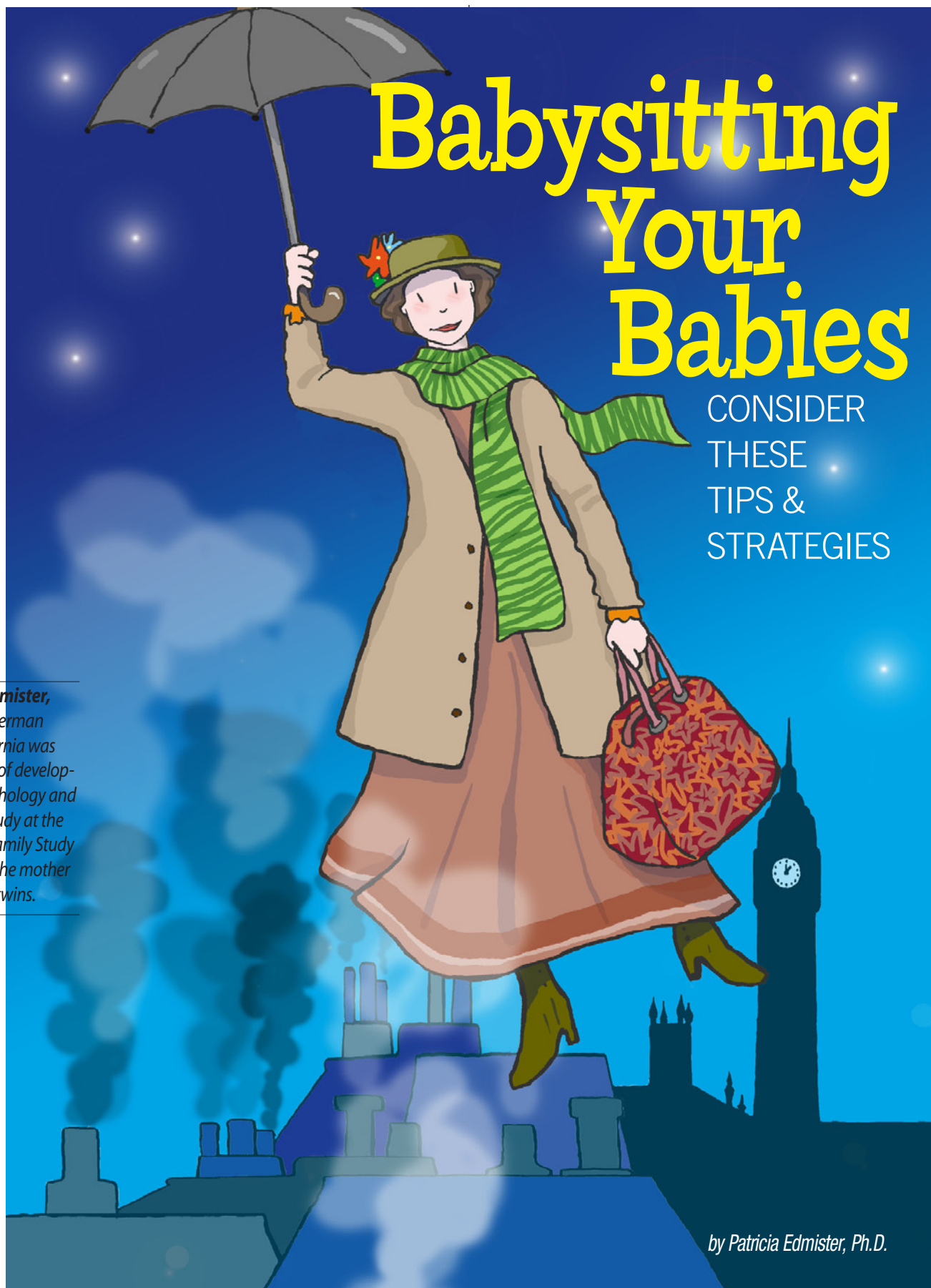


PRESCHOOL

Babysitting Your Babies

CONSIDER THESE TIPS & STRATEGIES

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



by Patricia Edmister, Ph.D.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all find Mary Poppins to care for our children? No worries about discipline, who is the one in charge, the children's safety, cleanliness and health? Unfortunately, caregivers like Mary are few and far between. But leaving young youngsters in the care of others, whether it is full-time or just an occasional evening out doesn't have to be a nightmare, either.

Regardless of the amount of time the sitter will be watching your children, you can be more relaxed when you're out and about if you are sure of the sitter's qualifications, clear about your expectations in terms of house rules and how consequences should be applied, and thorough in your preparation of safety information (emergency numbers, cell phone numbers, a nearby neighbor that can help) and health products (first-aid kit, etc.)

In addition, you need to be sensitive to both the sitter's and your children's needs. For the sitter's benefit, you need to be clear on what the job entails. What will be the hours? What is the rate of pay? Is transportation provided or expected as part of the job? What are the children's schedules? How closely should the sitter enforce them? What should the sitter do if the children don't behave?

One of the best ways to train both the sitter and the children—and to evaluate whether or not a certain person is the one you want to have caring for your multiples—is to hold a trial run, giving the sitter a few hours or half a day with your children while you are in the house. You can show her the ropes, see how the children respond to her, model your discipline style for her (noting any modifications you make for each child), and have a chance to troubleshoot any problems that seem likely to arise.

For the trial run, make it clear to the sitter as well as the children that you expect the sitter to ask you questions regarding how to handle situations, that you expect him or her to tell you if there are problems with misbehavior, and that you expect the children to obey the sitter or to expect the normal consequences for ignoring instructions.

Again, it is critical that all concerned know what the house rules are, for although the sitter is in charge, your expectation is that he or she will manage things the way you want them managed. This does not mean that you cannot give them all some leeway in rules and scheduling. Many parents have established that having a sitter over for the evening is a special treat for the children—a time

when they can stay up a little later, or have an extra story, or watch a special DVD, thus creating a positive reaction to those nights, as opposed to a feeling of abandonment, when parents take time for themselves. Parents should go over these expectations; however, with the sitter in the children's presence, so all parties understand them.

WHEN YOUR MOM'S THE SITTER

Sometimes a family member, often a grandparent, may be the sitter. This can present its own special benefits, but also its own special problems. The expectation, of course, is that this is a person who really cares about the children, and that is wonderful! However, sometimes Grandma has her own opinions of what to do and how to do it, and her parenting style might not agree with yours. This situation requires the same type of discussion regarding child-rearing guidelines and house rules as required with any sitter, even if she is your own mother.

One mom who was concerned about offending her mother with rules that differed from those enforced when she was a child, made up a chart of the house rules, which she posted on the refrigerator and went over with her mother and the children, just as she did with any other babysitter. This showed her mother that the children knew the rules and were accustomed to doing things a certain way.

It also gave her a chance to explain to her mother what the rationale was behind the rules, which was helpful, for some of them were quite different from the rules in place when she had been growing up.

Do keep in mind, however, that some grandparents have very definite ideas about how things should be done. If their ways are significantly different from yours and not likely to change, you need to be realistic, deciding for yourself how comfortable you are with their ignoring the rules for an entire evening, or, for that matter, being too strict. If you are not comfortable with the possibility that they might just do their own thing, you may want to confine their visits to times when you are there, and use someone less connected to the family as your sitter. ♥

WHEN THEY DON'T MIND THE SITTER...

With multiples, as with all other siblings, you may find that one child may be better-behaved than another with a particular sitter. This can be due to many reasons. The child may have a pattern of provocative behavior with authority figures, perhaps even you; so you may need to give information, along with information about how you handle such behavior, to the sitter in preparation for the event. Another occurrence may be due to personality differences. We often find that some children respond better to one individual than do others.

In this case, it is important to listen to the children's feelings as well as the sitter's explanation. Discuss what occurred, how it was handled, and what should happen next time, if there is one. Occasionally, you may find that a sitter plays favorites between or among the children, and that can provoke misbehavior on the part of one or more. The key here is to try to get accurate information so that it doesn't happen again.

If you hear from the children or a neighbor, or your own suspicions suggest that something is not right, investigate, or go with your intuition and find a different sitter. Your children's health, safety and happiness are too important to risk taking chances. ♥





The Hidden SURPRISES

by Ellyce Field, Mary Ann Rutherford
and Christa D. Reed

WAYS TO HELP YOUR TWINS CELEBRATE THEIR BIG DAY!

of Twin Birthday Parties

Birthday celebrations for twins can be double the work and double the fun. But they are also double the chances to teach your children how to entertain their friends.

Tackle the birthday party “challenge” with the right attitude. Think of your children’s party or parties as a social learning experience. Giving a party is a social grace that must be practiced, as is learning how to act at a party.

Teach the children the steps for planning a party and following through with it can be fun for your children and rewarding for you. Because it is their party and they are going to do much of the work, gear the “need to do” lists to their level. Don’t make it too complicated. It is better to spend an hour together at the kitchen table making invitations than running all over town finding elaborate decorations.

Guest lists should be made by each child. If the party is the same day, many parents let each child invite the same number

of guests; it is perfectly acceptable for one guest to receive two invitations to the same party.

The age of the twins can help determine the number of guests to invite. Because children under 5 years of age tend to play next to each other rather than with each other, a general guideline to follow is to invite on less guest than the age that the children will be. If twins will be four, for example, then let each child invite up to three guests to his own or a shared party.

Will you come to my party? Give each birthday child the chance to issue his or her own invitations their own style. Tell each their options—by telephone, by email, social media, regular mail or hand delivery—according to how much time and energy you have available. Offer to help, but encourage each child to write or draw as much as they can. By teaching your twins the polite way to handle party invitations, you’ve not only completed a job, but helped teach a social skill—an extra birthday present for each of your twins! ♥

Birthday Parties on Location

A wide variety of restaurants, museums, childcare facilities and favorite family entertainment centers offer birthday party packages. Just be sure to ask a lot of questions and see the accommodations yourself before you reserve the place. Ask the following questions so you will not be surprised when the day arrives for the party:

- What comes with the package?
- Can you bring your own cakes?
- Can you bring your own entertainment?
- Are “goodie bags”, prizes or party favors included in the package?
- What type of child supervision is provided?
- Where will the party be held? Is an appropriate room available?
- Where are the bathrooms located?
- How will the children be transported?
- Are there a required minimum or maximum number of children allowed?
- Is there a time limit to the party?

Every city is full of special locations that lend themselves to a birthday celebration. Check your local sporting events, roller or ice skating rinks, elementary school gyms, batting cages, bowling alleys, mini golf courses, swim clubs, youth theaters, museums, science centers, youth concerts, restaurants with a magician or clown, petting farms, zoos and railroads for birthday party possibilities. ♥



Games are fun, but when you want to do something different try these fun ideas...

by Mary Ann Rutherford

“Mother-Daughter” teas or “Father-Son” nights – Include a craft project parents and children can complete together.

Come-As-You-Are Breakfast Party – Surprise the guests by waking them and bringing them back to breakfast, being sure to clue their parents in on the surprise ahead of time! This is always a big hit with the kids and the parents.

Shopping Spree – Set up a miniature shopping mall, complete with several mirrors. Offer items such as friends’ play clothes for dress-up games and garage sale treasures. Give each guest a purse of pennies or play money to buy her dresses, jewelry, hats, scarves, accessories, as well as makeup! Top the afternoon off with a tea at your own “restaurant” on little tables and chairs.

Scavenger Hunt – Make a list of items to be scavenged, putting a time limit on the hunt. The team who finds the most items wins.

Craft projects – Make seasonal crafts, such as ornaments, colored eggs or decorated cookies.

Little Theater – Let young children dress up in simple costumes and act out a play, with an adult as the narrator. Substitute names of the guests and hosts for names in the play!

TV Show – Let the children perform a TV show, giving guests’ parts to play like the host, celebrity guests, commercial announcers, newscasters and sportscasters. Allow the guests to invent their own script, or write one of your own before they arrive and record the ‘show’ on a video recorder to show everyone when they are done! Who knows...maybe it will even go viral! ♥



Birthday Bonus

Party Planning Tips for Twins

by Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

Hosting a shared twin birthday party can be hectic but also a great deal of fun... here are some tips to consider when throwing a shared party for your multiples:

● Make sure you limit the party to no more than two hours—this is a perfect amount of time for everyone to enjoy themselves without getting out of control. Plan small, simple parties...resist the temptation to invite double the number of children at one party!

● Save the elaborate entertainment for older twins. Most 3-to-5 year-olds like to entertain themselves. Your basement full of toys or backyard swing set might be more fun than any costly entertainment you would hire.

● Keep the food simple—stick to child pleasers like cheese pizza, chicken nuggets, hot dogs or macaroni & cheese. Consider just serving cake and ice cream to eliminate extra clean up and to cut costs!

● Enlist help! Be sure to get older siblings, cousins, friends and family members to help during the party to help with crowd control and time management.

● Does space seem to be an issue at your house? Then plan a party away from the house! One of my twin boys’ most favorite parties we did was when they turned 4 and we had their party in a conference room at the local firehouse. We brought in cake, ice-cream and snacks and our local fire department gave everyone a plastic fire hat, coloring books and other fun favors and we watched a fire safety video and then toured the fire house! Other fun parties we have planned over the years included roller skating, an indoor swim party, movie/pizza party, mini-golf and bowling. Depending on the time of year, having a picnic at a park with playgrounds are always fun, too!

● Be sure to have a separate cake for each twin! Sounds like a lot of cake but EVERY child wants to be able to blow out their own birthday candles and make their own wish! Consider using smaller, one-layer cakes and allowing each twin to choose their cake theme and how it is decorated!

● Sing Happy Birthday to each twin separately! Be sure to explain to party guests that you want to sing to each child and which order you will sing (for example, “we are going to sing first to Nick and then to James”)

● When your twins have the same interests, often they will receive the same gifts from friends. Try using color coded bows or stickers to label each of the gifts from friends as they arrive and number them according to the giver. Then allow your twins to open #1 first then #2 and so on and makes it easy for you to keep track of the guests that gave each gift.

● Want a quick and easy idea for “thank-you” gifts/party favors? Pre-make all your thank you notes. When guests are leaving put the pre-made thank you note on a toy you purchase from the dollar store (like a kite, bubbles or sidewalk chalk) and you have saved a step when the party is over!

● Keep your eyes open for all the wonderful ‘birthday clubs’ offered throughout the year to receive FREE coupons and goodies for your twins. Baskin-Robbins, McDonald’s and Orange Julius has great offers, and be sure to also check out local merchants, too!

● Arrange to spend a day with them—separately or together—to redeem all the birthday club coupons. If you collect all the goodies in one morning, you can take them to the park and make a day of it. Pack a picnic to save even more money! ♥



1 PARTY OR 2 ?

by Ellyce Field

Will your family have shared or separate parties for your multiples? This is the quintessential question, the annual topic of conversation for parents of twins everywhere. Many parents feel guilty about celebrating their twins' birthday with one party because they fear that they aren't helping each child feel unique on his special day. They also worry that the children won't receive the same number of gifts.

"Until my boy/girl twins were 8-years-old," declared one mother, "We could have their birthday parties together. But then, it became "uncool" for the boys to like the girls. So they had to draw straws to see who would have the first party and had separate parties on separate days. It was lots of work, but as two different people, I believe that my twins should each have the chance to express his or her unique desires."

"My 35-year-old husband is a twin who still resents sharing his birthday with his brother," sighed another mother of twins. "I don't want my girls to have those negative feelings all their lives, so each has her own invitations, plates and cake when it's birthday time. Right now, they have the same friends; but if that changes, I'll give each twin her own party."

Logistically, details such as the date selection need to be discussed before attempting two parties. Will each child invite the same number of children? Will the parties be back-to-back on one day, a week apart or a day apart? Will shared neighborhood or family friends be invited to both parties? If the twins are a boy and a girl, will the parties be divided by gender? When answered by the twins themselves, these questions can give valuable insight into each twin's personality and need to feel special.

Not only their personalities, but also the age of the twins, help determine the way that their birthday is celebrated. One mother of six children, ranging from 18-years-old to 2-year-old twins, suggested taking older children on special outings separately or perhaps bring along a friend. "Just one birthday child and a best friend will go out with us for dinner and a show or to a basketball game. We make it his day, and he gets all the attention," she explained.

One adult twin has unhappy memories about her shared birthday. "I have always regretted never having my own birthday party," she admitted. "My twin sister and I were born on my older sister's birthday. Because we had so many birthdays on the same day, we never had separate birthday celebrations. If we had a

party, we had to have one big one together. I still remember the time my sister's friends spent the night on my birthday." Even as an adult this woman rarely entertains, but promises that she will raise her twins with an individual birthday celebration for each.

Time, expense and effort were the top three reasons to have one party for both children, according to mother of twins, Bobbie Charnas, a Farmington, Michigan mother of 10-year-old identical twins, Jason and Craig was honest. "I really don't enjoy planning parties. We have four children and their birthdays fall within three months. The boys enjoy sharing one party because they have always shared interests and friends. There is not a lot of competition between them, so they work well together choosing the party theme, favors and cake. They think of their birthday as a special event to share and they look forward to it."

Marlene Krochmal, a mother of 5-year-old boy/girl twins, Robbie and Tracy, said that she is sensitive to the issue of giving separate parties for each of her twins. In the past, her twins have liked to give one party with a boy/girl theme, such as Minnie Mouse and Mickey Mouse. "Our friends tend to buy them compatible gifts, too," Krochmal said, "like Barbie and Ken dolls."

A shared party can be individualized through the choice of a theme and cake; most young children think of their party in these terms, anyway. Instead of insisting on a well discussed compromise, incorporate two themes and two cakes so that each will feel he has designed part of his party. Be sure to take a separate picture of each child with his own cake, too!

Separate guest lists also differentiate the two children. If one party is being given, some children enjoy sending out separate invitations, based on the theme, to separate school friends. Older children might enjoy drawing an invitation and including all the information on a piece of white construction paper.

Young twins may enjoy being the Birthday King or Queen at the head of separate tables and acting as the special captains for team games. They may also want to choose the favors for each of the guests. Many families give each guest two favors—one from each birthday child.

Ellyce Field was the *Kid Stuff* Columnist for the *Detroit News* and contributing writer for several national magazines. She is co-author of *Kids and Cars* and the mother of three, including twins.

Birthday Party Theme Ideas for Twins!

by Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

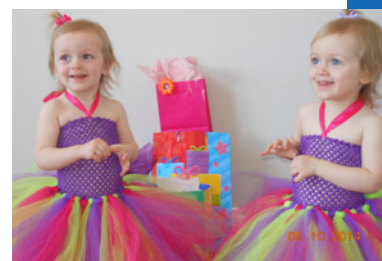
We asked our readers and fans what they thought were great Birthday Party theme ideas for all twin-types and we got some really great responses! We got lots of "Frozen" and "Cake Smash" themes as well as lots of favorite TV and movie characters, too. Check your local community for unique and fun places to throw a party. Think outside the box and get creative! Here are just a sampling of some of the parties you could throw:

Ideas for Girl twins...

Names & twin-type: Hailey & Riley, identical twins
City/State: Savannah, Georgia
Party Theme: "Under the Sea"
Party Age: 3rd Birthday
Special tip: By hand-making all the décor, making the food myself and shopping at the dollar store I only spent \$150.00 for all the food and decorations!
Submitted by: Kaylah Davis



Names & twin-type: Addison & Brooklynn, identical twins
City/State: Michigan
Party Theme: "Pink & Purple"
Party Age: 2nd Birthday
Special tip: I created fun decorations like the DumDum Suckers stuck in a foam ball and then put them in a pot. Used cotton candy on a stick & gumballs in clear vase to add to the color theme.
Submitted by: Karen Sobczak



Names & twin-type: Annie & Violet, identical twins
City/State: Lynden, Washington
Party Theme: "Beautiful Butterfly"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: We started a new annual birthday tradition where daddy makes the cakes and I decorate them!
Submitted by: Rachel Vos



Names & twin-type: Madeline & Isabelle, fraternal twins
City/State: Schomberg, Ontario CANADA
Party Theme: "Rainbow colored FUN!"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: Music was a playlist of upbeat songs such as "Happy" and "Girls Just Wanna have Fun" and we had a slideshow playing through out the party of all their photos taken during their 1st year.
Submitted by: Melissa Pasqua



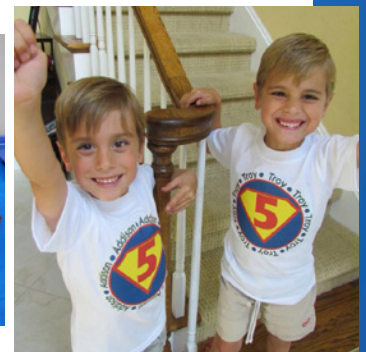
Ideas for Boy twins...

Names & twin-type: Kipton & Clayton, fraternal twins
City/State: Milroy, Indiana
Party Theme: "Survivor"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: We invited anyone and everyone that helped us "survive the first year as twin parents!" We requested no gifts as their gift was their help! We wanted to thank them for helping us conquer this twin parenting challenge!
Submitted by: Tonya Ruf



Names & twin-type: Tatum Ray & Hudson William, identical twins
City/State: Aylver Ontario CANADA
Party Theme: "Lil Monsters"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: I made all the snacks to follow the "monster" theme like making monster mouths with apples, peanut butter and marshmallows and added monster eyes to all the food bowls to make it more fun!
Submitted by: Ange Fehr

Names & twin-type: Addison & Troy, fraternal twins
City/State: Gulf Breeze, Florida
Party Theme: "Twin Superheroes Turn 5"
Party Age: 5th Birthday
Special tip: We rented out a gym that has inflatable bounce houses and a party room. I even made masks for all of the kids (and some adults), using felt, hot glue, elastic and stickers. The cake was a huge hit as well...an entirely edible Super Hero City, custom made by some ladies from my church.
Submitted by: Regan Lee



Names & twin-type: Will & Zachary, identical twins
City/State: Clifton, New Jersey
Party Theme: "Dr. Seuss"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: There was an activity table that had props for a homemade photo booth complete with a Polaroid frame and personal hashtag (we call the boys the Twinkies so the hashtag was #TwinkiesTurnOne). The boys wore matching Dr. Seuss themed outfits and my husband and I wore "Thing Mom" and "Thing Dad" t-shirts.
Submitted by: Chrissy Andrascik

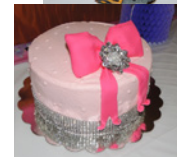
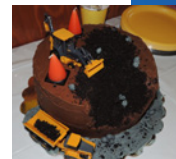


Ideas for Boy/Girl twins...

Names & twin-type: Nathaniel & Anniah, fraternal twins
City/State: Phoenix, Arizona
Party Theme: "Sesame Street"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: Because I am a full-time working mom, I started planning their party six months in advance of their 1st birthday party.
Submitted by: Ai-Chau Ray



Names & twin-type: Ian & Karsyn, fraternal twins
City/State: Hannibal, Missouri
Party Theme: "Dirt & Diamonds!"
Party Age: 2nd Birthday
Special tip: The party included a big dirt pile in the garage for the boys to dig in, and the girls were asked to come in their favorite princess dresses.
Submitted by: Greg & Erika Elston



Names & twin-type: Mason & Ellaina, fraternal twins
City/State: The Pas in Manitoba, CANADA
Party Theme: "Old McDonald"
Party Age: 1st Birthday
Special tip: Being a photographer, and obsessed with photos, I wanted to make sure that we had a ton of photos of their party, and knew I wouldn't have the time, and I actually wanted to be IN some of them so I hired a local photographer to take photos. Best advice? Plan early! Don't leave anything until the last second. And also don't take the day too seriously. Have fun!
Submitted by: Sara Francoeur

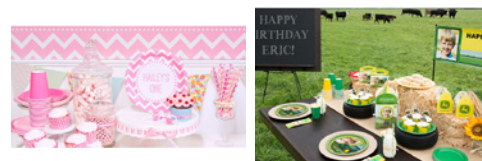
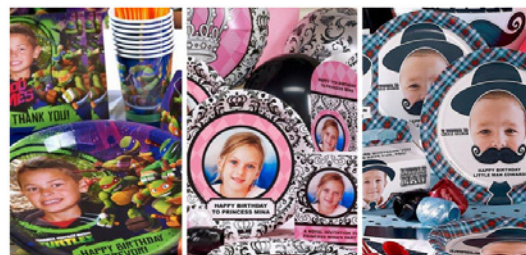


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Our Twins Were Born Yesterday— And Today!

TWINS Magazine Editorial Staff

Most twins receive extra attention from inquisitive family and friends because of their actual or perceived similarities in looks, intelligence and even behavior. But it is one difference between them that some multiples live with throughout their lifetimes that provides an additional source of mystery to their twinship—different birthdays. For some babies, the difference actually saved their lives!

“Our first girl, Hannah, was born on July 26, 1991, at 11:57 pm, and her fraternal sister, Kelley, quickly followed at 12:01 am on July 27—two babies, two birthdays,” relates Linda Sener. “I can remember the doctor laughing saying, ‘Okay, you have 45 seconds if you want them to have the same birthday.’”

Being able to “give” multiples different birthdays may simply be an accident of timing, as in the case of the Sener twins, or may be the result of circumstances of birth that create necessary, but unusually long, interval between the birth of twins. For example, in some deliveries, labor ceases for a prolonged time following the first twins’ birth. Also, in some cases, one baby is born vaginally and his co-twin, due to positioning or other factors must be born by Caesarean section, which was not an expected event. A delayed interval birth takes place when one multiple is delivered prematurely, but doctors are able to halt labor and keep the remaining multiple(s) in their mother’s womb to grow and develop. Some of these multiples - twins, triplets or more - were born days, weeks or even months apart.

In a few instances superfetation—the fertilization of two or more eggs released in different menstrual cycles—may lead to the “delivery of full-term infants separated by weeks or months,” says Nancy Segal, Ph.D. and leading twin researcher. Indeed, in *The Curious World of Twins*, co-authors Vincent and Margaret Gaddis report twin births separated by 25, 45, 56 and even an amazing 137 days.

Medical intervention has achieved a purposeful delay between births, as in the births of Elizabeth Starnes’ fraternal triplets, Rachel, born July 29, 1991 and Blair & Emily, born August 9. “When I went into pre-term labor at 26 weeks, I was admitted to the

hospital and given the usual anti-contraction drugs to try and halt my labor,” says Starnes. “Although the magnesium sulfate did its job, I had already dilated to three to four centimeters, and the first baby’s sac was ruptured.

“Upon examination, my doctor could see the baby’s head and knew she should not stay there. Since I was only nearing my 27th week of pregnancy, my doctor was concerned about the babies’ ability to survive. So, he bravely decided to try to deliver one of the babies and leave the other two in utero to grow a little more. We were lucky. All of our girls are healthy now, but little Rachel has had much more of a struggle... It still amazes us that only 11 days more in utero could make such a difference.”

This type of delivery is unusual, but an important possible option to explore when the situation is critical, as in the Starnes’ case. Birth interruption requires “just the right timing and conditions,” says Peter Fehr, M.D., maternal fetal specialist at North Memorial Medical Center in Robbinsdale, Minnesota.

Today, fetal monitoring procedures allow physicians to more comfortably let nature take its course in many twin births. In cases of IVF (in vitro fertilization), some question if eggs are extracted from a woman, fertilized and then frozen to be implanted years later—and years apart, are these children, who were conceived at the same time, but born different times, twins?

No, said Nancy Segal. “Twins, triplet and other higher-order multiple births experience both common prenatal and postnatal environments. The special birth and life history situations uniquely distinguish such sibships.” In short, Segal says that babies need to be “Wombmates” to qualify as twins, triplets or higher-order multiples. Since twins born on different days or months did share a common womb, they are indeed twins. Thanks to nurture and/or medical intervention, these former “wombmates” gain their own separate birthdays.

Most parents of twins with different birthdays consider the happenstance a plus. “I think it will be a lot of fun for the girls to have something about them that isn’t the same,” says Amy Dobson, mother of identical twin girls who were born on different days. “We can have two separate parties or party all night long. I guess I will wait and see what they want to do!” ♥



Happy Different-Twin Birthday Stories!

For the most part, twins and multiples share the same birthday. After all, twins are defined as two offspring born together. That means the same day, right? Not necessarily! After reading about a set of twins born in two different decades, we wanted to share with you some other unique and different twin birthday stories:

In 2013, as people around the world partied their way into the New Year, two mothers gave birth to two of the last babies of 2013 and two of the first babies of 2014.

While born just minutes apart, their twin babies entered the world in two different years. On Dec. 31, 2013, at 11:58 p.m., Yaleni Santos Tohalino gave birth to baby girl Lorraine Yaleni Begazo, who weighed 6 pounds, 4.9 ounces, at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, in Washington, D.C. Soon after, her twin brother Brandon Ferdinando Begazo was born on Jan. 1, 2014, at 12:01 a.m., weighing 5 pounds, 10.4 ounces. That same night in Toronto, two fraternal twin sisters were also born in 2013 and in 2014, respectively. At Trillium Health Partners-Credit Valley Hospital, older sister Gabriela Salgueiro was born on Dec. 31, 2013, at 11:52 p.m., weighing 6 pounds, 16 ounces. On Jan. 1, 2014, at 12:00:38 a.m., younger twin Sophia Salgueiro was born, weighing 5 pounds, 13 ounces.

In 2007 while crowds were gathering to ring in the New Year a set of twins in Boston, MA were born in two different years—

Jennifer and Scott Hoenig planned to celebrate New Year's Eve quietly with a bottle of apple cider, non-alcoholic of course. Jennifer Hoenig had been on bed rest at Tufts New England Medical Center for three weeks prior to keep her from having her babies too early. "We had joked earlier about the babies being born in different years" Jennifer Hoenig said. Their baby girl arrived at 11:58 PM, weighing just 1 pound 15 ounces. She was the last baby of 2006. Then, at the stroke of midnight and about 10 or 15 seconds, the Hoenigs met their baby boy at 2 pounds, 7 ounces. He was the city's first baby of 2007. "Our resolution was to take care of these two," Jennifer Hoenig said.

The Goddeke twins of Ann Arbor, Michigan, were also born in two different years—

Susan and Paul Goddeke welcomed their twins back in 1991 and 1992. Katherine was born at 11:56 P.M. in 1991 at St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, weighing 8 pounds, 3 ounces. Her sister Jessica then arrived at 12:14 A.M. the next day and year, 1992, on New Year's Day, weighing 6 pounds, 15 ounces. The mother, Susan, said, "We weren't exactly watching the clock, but we were ready to yell, 'Happy New Year!'"

Twins Born a Millennium Apart—Twins Aaron and Luke Hegenberger were born just eight minutes apart. What makes their arrival unique is that they were born in different millennia. Aaron was born at 11:53 p.m., Dec. 31, 2000; at the South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, Mass., and his brother came along eight minutes

later, at 12:01 a.m., Jan. 1, 2001. "This is terrific," says Dr. Robert Vanderlin, who delivered the twins. "What you have is one born in each millennium." The babies came early for Debra Hegenberger of Pembroke, Mass., who wasn't due until early February. She and her husband, John, had been planning to watch the New Year's Eve celebrations on television. "When I got back to the room (after the births), I said, 'Geez, we missed the ball dropping,'" said Hegenberger. The parents said they don't know yet just how they'll celebrate the boys' birthdays in years to come.

Twins born a school year apart—Lexus and Amber Conway are identical in almost every way—but their different birthdays could mean they start school a year apart! Born either side of midnight on the evening of Sunday, August 31, 2008, the sisters straddle the cut-off point for the academic year. Lexus was born naturally, just 45 minutes before Amber was delivered by caesarean section on September 1, 2008 at the Barratt Maternity Unit in Northampton. Unfortunately, September 1st is the cut-off date for starting school in their area, so only the first-born twin would turn five in time for the start of kindergarten. But parents Sarah Conway and Ian Caldwell are already determined the twins will be taught together. "There's no way you can have one sitting at home while the other one starts school," said Sarah. "They're going to school together. It's a shame they can't be a bit more lenient." Ian, 42 and a twin himself, said the family would either have the girls taught at home, or would move to Spain if they were unable to start primary school together. Separate birthdays are also causing problems for vaccination dates and appointments, with Lexus being technically a day older than her sister. How do you have a birthday on one day and do it all over again for the other one? And how do you choose which day to celebrate both?" After the difficult birth, the family is looking forward to settling into a routine and has already discovered the girls' different personality traits.

Leap Year Twins—For Laura Pendergrass of Scott City, Missouri, her fraternal twin girls were born on leap day, February 29, 1992. They solved their birthday problem by having our eldest twin, Angela; celebrate her birthday on February 28 and her twin sister, Susan, on March 1. Then, every four years on leap day, they have a huge birthday bash for both of them.

Twins Born in Separate Towns—Ron Shumate, a twin, once wrote into TWINS™ Magazine telling us about his story. His twin brother Donald was born at home on August 2, 1950 in Man, West Virginia. A midwife delivered him. When she discovered there was at least one more baby coming, they took their mother to the nearest hospital. Two days and 10 hours after Donald's birth, Ron was born on August 4, in Logan, West Virginia. ♥



It's Okay to Be Overwhelmed

by Dr. Barbara Nefer

As a parent of multiples, you're probably used to having everyone, from family and friends to total strangers, make a fuss about your kids. They might crow about your "little miracles" or say, "You're so lucky to have twins. It must be wonderful!" Don't worry if a part of you silently responds, "If only you knew!" It's easy for outsiders to focus on the positive aspects of having twins. They forget that you also face the usual downsides of parenting but that they're also multiplied. It feels natural to be stressed about work or school or household responsibilities, but when parenting is at the root it brings a gut reaction of, "Uh oh, I must be a bad parent. I should never feel resentful about my children. What would people say if they knew what I was thinking?"

You don't need to feel guilty or ashamed. Every parent has those days, and it doesn't mean that you love your children any less or that you're not grateful to have multiple blessings. It's simply a sign that your reserves are running dry and that you need to regroup. Instead, admit that you're overwhelmed without attaching any judgment. Negative feelings add an additional drain that you don't need. Your energy can be spent more effectively on reviewing your priorities and making a realistic plan that allows you to cut back on certain tasks or take a different approach. How can you apply this to your hectic household? There are four simple steps:

1 Acknowledge that you're overwhelmed. You may be used to denying that feeling because admitting it means you're a bad parent. Nothing is farther from the truth. You'll be a better parent if you learn to acknowledge your feelings and take steps to deal with them. Watch for the signs of stress. Are tense feelings building? Are you starting to overreact to small things? Do a quick test by using a scale of 1 to 10. Let's say one of the twins spilled her milk. On a scale of 1 to 10, a normal annoyance level might be 2 or 3. If you skyrocket up to 10, 7 or 8 points are coming from other stressors. Use this as an objective measure of just how overwhelmed you might be feeling.

2 Give yourself permission to be overwhelmed. Once you admit your feelings, you might automatically move to guilt: "I'm being a bad parent. I shouldn't have overreacted. I just need to be stronger." Guilt doesn't accomplish anything positive. It pushes you to deny your feelings, but the stress will just find another way to resurface. Instead, admit that you're overwhelmed and make it an objective observation. Don't pass any judgment on yourself. Conserve your energy for the next step.

3 Prioritize your responsibilities and consider alternatives. Once you've admitted your feelings, sit down and make a list of all the tasks that are combining to overwhelm you. Then go back over the list and prioritize it based on the potential outcome if you don't do an item. For example, your list might include caring for your twins, who have both come down with a cold, helping their brother with a school project, making dinner, and baking brownies for a party at work tomorrow. Obviously, the sick twins take the top priority spot. If you don't take care of them, they'll feel miserable as their symptoms get worse. Next is helping their brother with his project. If you don't do that, he might not get it finished and his grade will be dropped for turning it in late. Not making dinner means that everyone will be hungry and cranky, and not baking the brownies will mean disappointed co-workers. Now consider alternatives to each item. Could you call your mother-in-law to come over and help with the twins? Could you point your son to some websites where he can start research on his project until his dad gets home to help him in more depth? Could you order a pizza for dinner? Could you stop by the store on your way to work tomorrow and buy some pre-made brownies for the party?

4 Proceed based on your priority list without feeling guilty that you can't do everything. Many of the options discussed in the example involve asking for help from others or using outside resources. If you're used to doing everything yourself, an inner voice might whisper, "If you call your mother-in-law, she'll see what a bad parent you are" or "If you bring store-bought brownies, your co-workers are going to laugh behind your back." Immediately picture a giant red stop sign or other cue that signals you to stop the guilt. Counter it by reminding yourself that asking for help is healthy choice. It increases your effectiveness as a parent because if you make choices that conserve your energy, you'll have more available to use for the important tasks. If other people judge you, their opinion has no real power over you unless you allow it to. Remind yourself that their opinion is based on their own life experience. They have no real way of understanding your challenges or knowing the best choice for your own family.

Everyone gets overwhelmed at times, and when you're raising multiples the challenges rise accordingly. By reminding yourself that it's okay, creating a workable plan, tapping into all available resources and detaching from others' judgment, you might just find that those stressful days are coming a little less frequently. ♥

by Melissa Koch

Surprise It's Twins!



Lily (left) and Kennlea (right) at only two days old.

In today's society, we like to believe that nothing can go awry and we can be in control of almost all situations. With advances we have made in technology, and in the medical field especially, we tend to believe nothing can go unknown. This is the story of the day our small family from Northern Indiana learned that this is not always the case.

In December 2008, our family learned we were expecting a new member to our three-person family. We were so excited and did everything I'd like to think any expectant family would do. We set up prenatal appointments, followed everything our obstetricians told us to do, and made sure we didn't miss anything. We read the books, made sure I was eating right, and were getting prepared for a life with a preschooler and an infant.

At 18 weeks, our obstetricians- I saw three in rotation- ordered a routine ultrasound to be able to see the growth of the baby and make sure everything was going as planned. At that appointment, the ultrasound technician revealed to us we were having a little girl, and that all looked well, except, because of the way the baby was lying, the technician couldn't get a very good view of part of her brain. Because of this, the doctors thought it necessary for us to go back at 22 weeks to get a better image.

At our 22-week ultrasound, the technician again confirmed we were indeed having a little girl and this time got an almost perfect image. We were elated and so ready for the arrival of our second daughter, whom we had decided to name Kennlea.

Fast forward a little ways, at 38 weeks along and a total weight gain of 25 pounds, my water broke at home. Because this was our second pregnancy, we knew what to expect and things seemed to go smoothly. Upon arriving at the hospital, the usual happened. I got hooked up to the belly monitors and IV's and awaited the arrival of our precious little girl. My mom and our then four-year-old daughter Abby, waited patiently out in the hallway, coloring pictures and wondering what her new baby sister would look like.

After a little over an hour, our little Kennlea was born. I kept touching her hands and feet and telling my husband that she was so tiny. I recalled a few weeks earlier, one of my doctors asking me how much our first daughter, Abby, weighed, to which I told him she weighed 8 lbs. 6 oz. He told me he expected this one would

weigh about the same, if not, maybe even closer to 9 lbs. So when this tiny 6 lb. 12 oz. baby arrived, it was definitely not what we had expected.

Immediately, to no surprise of my own, my husband asked the doctor why the baby was so much smaller than we had expected. The doctor tried to explain things it could have been, which we were trying to understand through all the excitement. After roughly four minutes of oodling over our beautiful baby, I noticed my doctor's face turn white and he says, "Oh my goodness, there is another baby in there..."

I didn't know what to think. All I could seem to imagine was that my husband, who tends to be a bit of a jokester, had put the doctor up to it and that even perhaps I was on Candid Camera. I looked at the doctor and said, "Are you kidding?" He immediately replied, "No, honey, I'm not kidding." He started calling for nurses and using medical jargon that I had no idea what he meant, and I was in a full-out panic. Things kind of seemed to blur in my mind, and I just hoped that this baby, whom we hadn't seen via ultrasound, or even known about this entire time, would be okay.

When the door to our delivery room flew open and a nurse called for more assistance from other nurses, my mom, who was still waiting in the hallway, went into panic mode as well, wondering what could be going wrong. Luckily, one of the nurses stopped and told her everyone was okay but that they thought there were two babies!

Two minutes later, our surprise baby was born...another little girl! She weighed in at a very happy, healthy 7lbs. 8oz.! When Abby finally got to come in and see her new baby sister, for whom she had long awaited, we told her there were actually two baby sisters, but that we only had a name for one of them. We asked her what she thought would be a good name for the other baby to which she said, "Lily."

To this day, five years later, our family likes to tell everyone that we will never play Hide and Go Seek with our twin girls Kennlea and Lily. I mean, if they can dodge two ultrasounds and fool at least three different doctors for 9 months, chances are if they hide from us, we may never find them again! ♥

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It's cold and
flu season are
you ready?

7 Fever Myths

by Steven Sainsbury, M.D.

Parental concerns about fevers are a common reason for midnight visits to the emergency room. With the bewildering assortment of oral, rectal, skin and ear thermometers, along with dozens of varieties of fever-reducing medicines, a whole fever-phobia has developed in our culture. Fever should certainly be respected, but it should not be feared. Let's dispel some of the myths surrounding this symptom, and hopefully your life will be a little less stressful when your twin's internal furnaces are working overtime.

MYTH #1: Fevers cause brain damage

This is perhaps the most commonly held fever myth, and one that I have to discuss almost every night in the ER with worried parents. Fevers that are due to infection, even those reaching heights of 105F, will not cause brain damage. It is true that aches and pains can accompany high fevers, and the fever can even produce some nonsensical or babbling behavior, but high fevers will not permanently injure your child. (Brain damage will occur in body temperatures over 108F, which only results from environmental conditions—a child left in a closed car in hot weather, for example.)

MYTH #2: Fever seizures are harmful

There is nothing quite so frightening as to observe your precious child seizing in front of you. Fortunately, fever seizures rarely last more than a few minutes and do no permanent harm. Thankfully, children who have had febrile seizures are not at increased risk for learning disabilities, developmental delays, or epilepsy.

MYTH #3: All fevers need to be treated

Fever does not have to be treated. Why? Because treating the fever will not help combat the underlying disease process. However, because fevers above 102F can sometimes cause discomfort, it is reasonable to treat these fevers with acetaminophen or ibuprofen liquid. A few words of caution: It is not necessary to soak or sponge your child with cold-water baths—this only reduces the fever for a few minutes. And never use rubbing alcohol to cool your feverish child. Alcohol is toxic to infants, and will be absorbed through the skin.

MYTH #4: Without treatment, fevers will just keep getting higher

Our brains have a wonderful internal thermostat that will stop a fever from getting higher than 105-106F—whether you treat the fever or not.

MYTH #5: With treatment, fevers should return to normal

Aggressive fever treatment may not always work. It may only lower the fever a degree or two, or may only keep the temperature down for an hour or two. Knowing this, be careful not to get frustrated and over-treat a feverish child, risking an overdose. Remember: the fever is not the real problem.

MYTH #6: The higher the fever, the more dangerous the illness

This can be a dangerous myth. A child can be quite ill, with a serious infection like pneumonia or meningitis, and yet have a low-grade fever or no fever at all. Conversely, benign viral infections, that do no harm, can cause high fevers that are unresponsive to fever-lowering medicines. How your child appears (does he look sick?) is far more important than how high his fever may be.

MYTH #7: Any temperature higher than 98.6 is considered a fever

A normal person's temperature changes throughout the day. Furthermore, the range of "normal" temperatures can vary several degrees. Most pediatricians define a fever as any rectal temperature above 100.5F.

In summary, fever is simply a warning sign that an infection may be present. Think of it like a subtle grinding sound that suddenly appears from your car's engine. Upon hearing such a noise, would you wrap your engine in soundproofing material and start wearing earplugs so that you could no longer hear the grinding? Or would you have a mechanic investigate its source? Likewise, relax about the heat, while you begin a search for the flame. . ♡

SOOTHING COMMON SORE THROAT ROUGH SPOTS

Don't some people become carriers of strep?

Yes, they can. Carriers are those people who have strep bacteria in their throats but have no symptoms of the disease. However, they may be a source of infection in other family members. If a carrier state is detected, treatment with a single course of antibiotics is recommended. Remember, however, that most carriers have no symptoms or complications, and become culture-negative after a few weeks. If strep keeps recurring in different family members, your physician may elect to treat the entire family at the same time, hopefully eradicating the bug from the household at least for a while.

What if my child is allergic to penicillin?

Other antibiotics that are effective against strep include ampicillin, amoxicillin and erythromycin.

Can't viruses cause complications also?

Yes, they can, but the complications are very uncommon and rarely dangerous.

What is the cause of laryngitis?

Laryngitis is almost always due to the same viruses that cause sore throats. The inflammation tends to travel downward from the throat to the vocal cords. Hoarseness is the result. As many of us know, laryngitis is often painless, and like most viral infections goes away without treatment.

If most sore throats are due to viruses, why do they get better with penicillin?

They aren't getting better because of the penicillin. Study after study has shown that antibiotics have no effect on the speed in which the infection resolves.

Besides the complications of strep, are there any other dangerous complications of sore throats?

Absolutely, many types of bacteria can cause sore throats, and complications with each can occur. Probably the most dangerous is an infection called epiglottitis. In this illness, the flap of tissue that lies deep in the throat becomes inflamed and swollen, blocking the airway. This is a true emergency, characterized by a child who has a sore throat, fever, often refuses to swallow even her own saliva, and can be seen leaning forward to breathe. Should you have even the slightest suspicion of this problem, seek immediate care. . ♥

Seven J. Sainsbury, M.D. of San Luis Obispo, California, is a board-certified emergency medicine physician and the father of seven children, including three surviving quadruplets.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE FLU!

by Kimberly Kalfas, M.D.

When it comes to H1N1, most of us have primarily heard about pandemic, death, and the short supply and high demand of the vaccine. In return, most of us have probably had a panic-induced moment or two when making the decision to vaccinate our children or not.

We all know that the virus continues to spread and is affecting primarily the pediatric population more than the seasonal flu. Thus, the mortality rates for children have gone up. On a larger scale, the influenza death rate, as compared to all causes of mortality, is lower than congenital diseases, malignancies, assault and heart disease for those less than 4 years old, and you can add accidents and suicide for older children (ages 5 and up). In retrospect, H1N1 has turned out to be less of a problem than most predicted or imagined.

More factors than simply vaccinating go into the risk your child has for any number of diseases. Before making any decisions, you may want to take a look at the following:

How one reacts to a vaccine or virus depends on their ability to mount proper immune reactions. That can be altered by diet, mood, etc. The Standard American Diet is aptly termed SAD, as it is high in sugar, low in fiber and nutrient poor. Simple sugar alone has been found to lower white blood cell counts up to 50 percent two hours after ingestion. Is your child eating a healthy, whole foods diet rich in the colors of the rainbow, or are they eating the brown: macaroni and cheese, pizza and noodles?

Does your child still have a thymus, appendix, tonsils and spleen? Do they get sick often?

Many children have immune reactions to foods, which when properly tested are the most common foods in our diet (gluten, wheat, soy, dairy and chicken eggs). Premature deliveries, as well as formula-fed babies are more likely to have a decreased response, as they are more prone to have food allergies and a "leaky gut," indicating first defense systems of the skin, lungs and gut are suboptimal and immune resources are diverted to other tasks.

Is your house calm and fun, or is it stressful and chaotic? Stress can cause impaired immune responses to vaccines and to viruses. Positive mood, stress reduction techniques, humor, laughter and guided imagery can overcome stress.

Let's all learn a lesson from the H1N1 scare. Many of our children haven't been vaccinated, haven't contracted the virus, and are completely healthy. I invite you to put aside the fear, look at the whole picture with a balanced eye and an inner knowing, and make your choice regarding vaccinations. It is through empowerment that we make the best decisions for ourselves and for our children, and with our conviction to see it through, no matter the outcome. . ♥



Double Takes



1

John & James, FR
Age 8-months
Tuscaloosa, AL



2

Caleb & Libby, FR
Age 4-months
Phoenix, AZ



3

Malaya & Kara, ID
Age 2
St. John's Newfoundland Canada



4

Beaux & Hunter, ID
Age 8-months
Chicago, IL



5

Brooklyn & Bentley, FR
Age 4
Hudson Falls, NY



6

Kentley & Carley, FR
Age 6-months
Mustang, OK



7

Jamieson & Jacen, FR
Age 3-months
Newmarket, Ontario, Canada



8

Sawyer & Blair, FR
Age 8-months
Seymour, IN

January/February 2015



9

Aria & Mia, FR
Age 9-months
Victoria, BC, CANADA



10

Gregg and Giada "The G-Twins"
1 year old
Masspequa Park NY



11

Nathaniel & Anniah, FR
Age 7-months
Phoenix, AZ



12

Addi & Britt, ID
Age 11-months
Belton, SC



13

Nathaniel & Mark, ID
Age 2
Westminster Maryland



14

Reese & Raelyn, FR Age 3
AND
Dylan & Remi, FR
Age 5-months, Sidney, Ohio



15

Calliope & Clementine, ID
Age 6-months
Antioch, California



16

Carter & Grant, FR
Age 4-months
Fairmont, Minnesota



17

Lexi & Leyton, FR
Age 1-month
Herrin, Illinois



18

Baylee & Emilee, FR
Age 4
Abingdon Maryland



19

Canon & Carter, FR
Age 2-weeks
Ashland, Kentucky

Double Takes



20

Valentina & Thiago, FR
Age 5
Lehigh Acres, FL



21

Sunday & Ellia, FR
Age 7-months
Houston TX



24

Ava & Alec, FR
Age 5
Sydney Australia



22

Aaron & Leonardo, FR
Age 10-months
Daly City, California



23

Jacob & Erin, FR
Age 16
Sydney NSW Australia



25

Christian & Cohen, FR
Age 9-months
Four Oaks, North Carolina



26

Sophia & Isabelle, ID
Age 1-month
Sierra Vista, AZ



27

Avery & Lauren, FR
Age 1-month
Blue Hill, Nebraska



28

Knox & Maverick, FR
Age 1-month
Birmingham, AL



29

Hannah & Luke, FR
Age 1-month
Hoboken, NJ



30

Olen & Reese, FR
Age 15-months
Texarkana, Arkansas

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31 Laila & Peyton, FR
Age 5
Indian Head, Maryland



32 Evan & Siena, FR, age
6-months, Congers, NY



33 Ava & Yuna, ID, age 2, Brooklyn,
New York



34 James & Joshua, ID
Age 6
Camp Wood, TX



35 John & Addison, FR
Age 9-weeks
Tulsa, Oklahoma



36 Olivia & Penelope, FR
Age 9-months
Minneapolis, MN



37 Caden & Camden, ID
Age 9-months
Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania



38 Tegan & Tayla, FR,
Age 1
Bronx, NY



39 Sarah & Priscilla, ID
Age 4
East Northport, NY



40 Kellan & Sofia, FR
Age 4
Gregory, Michigan



41 Peyton & Levi, FR
Age 14-months
Forney, TX

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