

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

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May/June 2015

Pain
Management:
Should You
Worry About
Epidurals?



Twins Talk:
What Twins Tell
Us about Person,
Self & Society

**Are You a
Helicopter
Parent?**
Avoiding that Hover-
and-Smother Urge!

**Top 6 Tips for
Encouraging
Individuality with
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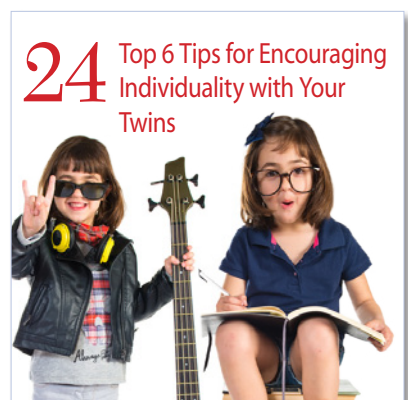
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 Multiples of America's 55th Annual Convention 'Building Bridges 2015' in Cincinnati, Ohio & the International Twins Association's 81st Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida

On the Cover:



Identical twins Annie & Violet age 4, have had their daddy Jamie wrapped around their little fingers from day one. They love swimming, going on bike rides and inventing characters for him to turn into silly and adventurous bedtime stories. Their most favorite thing is getting to paint his face and make his hair "pretty."

Cover Photo taken by: Rachel Vos
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Summer is finally here and that means much more time to spend with your kids, right? All this extra time also means much more time for us parents to have to figure out ways to keep them busy and safe while also enjoying all the fun these warm, sunny months bring! We are ready for summer and are happy to share our May/June 2015 edition with you.

Inside this issue we have so much great parenting information specific to twins like in our “Ages & Stages” sections our article on Pain Management: Should you worry about epidurals?; Capturing Summer’s Bounty by making your own baby food and we include a few recipes to get you started; our look at Love & Logic parenting techniques; and tips on how to plan your next family vacation with your preschool twins!

Have you ever wondered if you are a Helicopter parent? Read our article on ways to avoid that hover-and-smother urge and be sure to check out our in-depth interview with Dona Lee Davis, a twin and author of the new book, *Twins Talk: What Twins Tell Us About Person, Self and Society*. (Now available in our online store)

Another area of focus inside this issue is our article on the top 6 tips for encouraging individuality with your twins. I can remember when my twin boys were toddlers and my husband and I would make a special point to take the boys on separate adventures so they could get used to being apart and we could enjoy the individual time with each one. Even if I would take one to the grocery store with me to ‘help’ it was nice for both of us to experience this special alone time and also gave my husband and other twin the opportunity to enjoy the same special time. Even when we added two more singletons to our family, we continue to make special one-on-one time with all four boys.

Also inside this edition we celebrate our DADS in our special Double Takes section filled with 40 sets of twins and their dads—just in time for Father’s Day, too!

Did you know that Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome or TTTS is a deadly disorder affecting 10% to 20% of identical twin pregnancies? Inside this issue you can read one family’s survivor story from the St. Louis Fetal Care Institute. We also take a look at the evolution of the Twin Resource Center and how twins can transform the tragedy of losing their co-twin through the help of the Twin Resource Center.

Summer is a great chance for you to try and slow your schedule down if possible and take time to be silly and make lasting memories with your children. It really doesn’t matter if you go on a huge family vacation or pitch a tent in your backyard and make old-fashioned favorites like s’mores, your kids will remember the fact that you were there with them having fun. They may not remember what exactly you did or what you ate but they will have a lifelong memory of the valuable time you spent with them and that is something you (& them) will always cherish. Be sure to connect with us on Facebook and Twitter and join the conversation.



Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa Reed,
 Editor-in-Chief
 twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com

Twins release “Minecraft for Parents”

It’s hard to find a child who doesn’t play some kind of video game these days. Growing up, you probably played Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man or Centipede and thought you were the star of the video game revolution. Step back for a second. Have you tried today’s games? Do you realize how complicated they are? Take Minecraft for example. Oh, you’ve never heard of it? Are your children playing it, but you don’t understand the concept, let alone being helpless to offer advice? You aren’t alone. Twin Authors, Cody and Erica Wagner are proud to announce their latest release, “Minecraft for Parents.”

“Mom knows nothing about video games,” Cody laughingly stated when asked why he wrote this book. “We tried to teach her other games before and she just didn’t get it!” Co-author, Erica chimed in. “With this book, she’ll be able to know what we’re doing, and tell other parents how they can play this game. But not with us of course. Well, maybe”.

“Minecraft for Parents” is a how to type of book for the non-gamer. It doesn’t assume parents know anything but the name of the must have game they just purchased. Cody and Erica decided it was time for parents to get in on the fun in the virtual world. They said this game helps expand their creativity to include building houses, bridges as well as interact with other people nationwide playing at the same time. The twins even teach you the Minecraft lingo that is common with seasoned gamers. If you no longer want to feel left out and find the inner survivalist in you, grab this book and get ready to play as if your life depended on it. Minecraft for Parents is available at

<http://www.amazon.com/Minecraft-Parents-Cody-Wagner-ebook/dp/B00WUMFXQM>

Twins Days Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio Celebrates 40 Years!

Twinsburg, OH: The 2015 Twins Days Festival will be held August 8th and 9th. This annual international event is recorded as the “Largest Annual Gathering of Twins in the World” by the Guinness Book of World Records. Inaugurated in 1976, this year celebrates the Twins Days 40th festival. The Twins Days Festival Committee (TDFC) is proud to announce an appropriate time machine theme for this 40th festival “Twins Days: Times 2 Remember”, looking back over the past festivals and looking forward to the future of many more. Located 25 miles southeast of Cleveland, Twinsburg plays host to thousands of twins from all over the world. Non-twins are also welcome.

Saturday morning kicks off with the “Double Take” parade. Activities during the day will include twins contests, twins talent show; twins research area, twins group photo, entertainment, arts & crafts and twin related/sponsored booths, inflatables and amusement games, and a spectacular fireworks show. Also available are food concessions and official souvenirs Saturday and Sunday. Sunday morning’s activities include the Twins Days 5K

Run and Fun Walk benefitting the Melanoma Education Initiative. During the day the activities will be the same as Saturday’s with the exception of the parade and fireworks.

Twins are encouraged to register at the festival to be able to participate in the twins related activities and to be included in the official count. Registration forms can be downloaded from the Twins Days web site at twinsdays.org. The twins can also register at the festival site. For more information visit our website at twinsdays.org.

Chore war reality check, get your twins to pitch in with no complaints

My Job Chart is a free, easy to use online and mobile job chart that teaches children the importance of work ethic, accountability and money management. Parents can easily create various jobs for their child to complete such as cleaning the dishes or making the bed and assign various rewards to each task. Traditionally, rewards or allowance has been in the form of money, but with My Job Chart, rewards can be just about anything. Download your free mobile job chart here: <http://www.myjobchart.com>

Twin Love Concierge (TLC) is the USA's only Twin Maternity Concierge Service.

TLC offers expert twin parenting services to make the pre-birth time less stressful for multiple parents. From essential twin baby gear, preparing Moms for a multiples birth to setting up a successful twin home and nursery design, we have it all covered with our personalized NYC, Connecticut, LA, Boston and Miami concierge

The screenshot shows the My Job Chart mobile app interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for "My Jobs", "Extra Jobs", and "My Store", along with a "Log Out" button. Below this, it says "For Kids Friday, October 05, 2012". The main content area is divided into three sections:

- My name is Emily and this is my store!**: A section with a profile picture of a woman. It shows "You have 260 points waiting to be organized" and "I have \$8.00 ready to save." with a "Save points now Empty my piggy bank" button.
- Share**: A section showing "0 share points". It features a "Heifer International" campaign with "335 points" and "I am going to give \$3.35" and a "Share points now Tell my parents" button.
- Spend**: A section showing "845 spend points". It lists four items: "Add \$20 to Debit Card + \$50", "Eat Out", "Go Hiking", and "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Buy This Book!". Each item has a "Need More Points" button. A "Spend points now Buy these items" button is at the bottom.

service, parent workshops, playgroups or interstate Skype consultations.

TLC also helps expecting Multiple Moms on bed rest – our consultations are guaranteed to alleviate the feeling of being completely overwhelmed as we are the country’s leading twin experts and twin baby planners.

We are excited to announce that Twin Love Concierge has come to Miami!! If you are Expecting Twins/Multiples or know someone that is, please spread the word! Our classes will be run by a new member of our team Joanna Navarrete and held at Tutti-Bambini.

First class on July 11th - start securing your spot now on www.twinloveconcierge.com

Twin Love Concierge—USA’s only twin exclusive pre and post-partum maternity consultancy
www.twinloveconcierge.com

2015 MBC National Conference Hosted by the Edmonton Twin and Triplet Club (ETTC)

Live, Laugh and Learn!

Join us for the 2015 MBC Conference hosted by the Edmonton Twin and Triplet Club at the newly renovated Double Tree Hotel in Edmonton Alberta. From October 1-4, 2015 delegates will have the opportunity to take in a variety of speakers.

Throughout the weekend a variety of workshops will be offered to conference delegates. Through our theme of Live, Laugh and Learn, we will focus on school aged and older multiples. Speakers will prepare workshops on topics that include: Helping Multiples Prepare for College, Strategies for Effective Parenting, Social and Emotional Support for Kids with Learning Differences, and Raising Healthy Kids/Teens in an Age of Overindulgence. For a closer look at the Key Note Speakers, Workshop Presenters and their session topics, <http://multiplebirthscanada.org/index.php/about-us/events/conference-2015>

The weekend will also include plenty of time for socializing. Friday night’s theme is JEANS & JERSEYS where you can gamble for some fantastic prizes while enjoying pub style food served by the Double Tree’s chefs.

Stay tuned to our Conference website as more exciting speakers and workshops will be posted in the coming months. You can also “like” this Conference Facebook page for regular updates. The Edmonton Twin and Triplet Club is delighted to host the 2015 Conference and we are looking forward to welcoming you to our great city!

Be sure to mark October 1-4, 2015 on your calendar and save the date!

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Finding Double Happiness a World Away...

D.A. Smith lives in Connecticut. Her teenage twins now study Mandarin and will return to Asia for vacation soon.

My twins were born halfway around the world, in Singapore. Located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore is a cosmopolitan crossroads with a large expatriate population. The culture is predominantly Chinese, with Southeast Asian influences. I went to Singapore as a corporate spouse and, after working at an international school, transitioned to full-time motherhood at the birth of my twins.

Infant twins can stop traffic anywhere in the world. In Asia, with one of the lowest rates of twin births in the world, twins are even more of an attraction. Although a private person, I learned early on to deal with the attention that came with twin motherhood in Chinese culture. Just being out in public, my twins were an attraction. Shopping trips meant strangers who came up and touched the kids, sometimes pinching them! The attention could be overwhelming. It wasn't just that twins were special, I had hit the jackpot with a "matched set".

Chinese culture places strong emphasis on duality. The interlocking yin and yang symbol is an excellent example—the black and white, male and female halves form a coherent, complete

whole. Inevitably in Asia someone would comment to me that I was lucky, incredibly lucky!, to have a "dragon and phoenix"—two dualities completing a whole. There was also the Chinese concept of double happiness. Represented literally by writing the character for happiness twice side-by-side, the symbol is most often used at weddings.

A year after the kids were born we moved from Singapore to Hong Kong. Bustling Hong Kong provided more opportunities to go 'covert'. On weekends we broke out separate strollers for shopping and errands. But even without the magnet of the double stroller ("Twins!! Over here!"), smart passersby put two and two together. Tourists from mainland China, which has a one child policy, sometimes tried to take photos with us, as if our two-for-one good luck might somehow rub off.

While I established a routine in each city—playgroups with our local Mothers of Multiples club, weekly music classes, and trips to the playground—we were also eager to explore the region. With all the baby gear we towed with us, vacations could leave me exhausted. Also, in our neighborhood I could predict what level of attention the twins might attract but we had the privacy of our home to retreat to if things got overwhelming. This wasn't the

case when traveling. We were always "on" as a twin family during vacations in Asia.

Once, when my parents came to visit, we traveled to the Chinese city of Xian to see the famous terracotta warriors. After visiting a museum we started to play the 'swing along game'. My twin toddlers walked between a parent and grandparent, happily jumping and swinging between our arms in a virtually empty park. We hadn't gone a few paces until an older man suddenly ran up, grabbed my son, and started dancing down the block! While my irate husband swore at him in Mandarin, the man couldn't conceive that he had done anything alarming. Our family game with twins had been so charming he just couldn't contain himself. After this incident I stopped venturing out as much alone with the kids.

A few months later, we moved back to the United States. The adjustment to our new home in a Connecticut suburb was anti-climactic. After years of streets and malls full of people, America seemed deserted. Neighbors left early in the morning, not returning till dark. Our neighborhood didn't have sidewalks and passersby were a rarity. I took the kids out every day, frequenting playgrounds and story time at the library. But as autumn leaves fell and days turned colder, it felt like a hushed country hibernated even more. I struggled with reverse culture shock, trying to adapt again to the ways of my native land.

I had left America a newly married 20-something. I returned in my 30s, one of the only new moms in my generation of family and

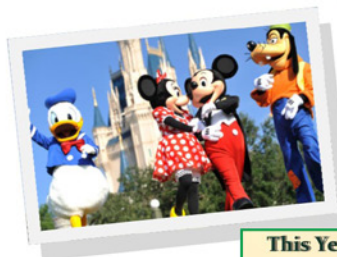
friends. In Asia there had been the dilemma of constant attention but there was also the support of a culture that revered twins and saw them as special. In New England, with a strong emphasis on individuality and managing by oneself, it felt like everyone's plate was full. And twins? They were everywhere! One year I checked our elementary school directory and counted no less than eight sets of twins (and one set of triplets). Families of multiples were so common we now felt practically invisible. Just talking about my twin toddlers antics with other parents at the swing set felt like bragging or, worse, complaining. No wonder I felt so conflicted! My native culture seemed to emphasize the harder aspects of twin parenting without the positive messages that had come with having twins in Asia.

With time I started a more joyful chapter, but in those early years back in America "double happiness" seemed far away. More than a decade since we returned to the U.S., my twin family has at last moved closer in daily life to finding the Chinese ideal of balance and harmony combined with an American can-do spirit. At high school this year my kids seized the opportunity to study Mandarin Chinese. They will spend the summer in Shanghai. I sometimes wonder what this next chapter holds. No longer nestled in a double stroller, they won't be the cute attraction they were the last time they were in navigating the challenges of, and finding happiness in, both cultures. ♥



International Twins Association (ITA) 81st Annual Convention

September 4-6, 2015
Orlando, Florida



**This Year's Convention will be at the
Rosen Plaza Hotel**

Reservations by phone: 1-800/627-8258 or 1-407.996.9700 **Group Name: International Twins Association**, Make Online Reservations at: www.IntlTwins.org. **Single or Double occupancy rates:** Contact Hotel for Room Rates; Family rate: Children 17 & under are FREE, **Book by JULY 29, 2015 to reserve your room!**

We invite Twins/Multiples of all ages along with friends & family to attend our 81st Annual Convention. Each year over Labor Day weekend, we get together to celebrate twins/multiples! This year's activities include the annual Double Trouble Golf Tournament, Sunday Evening Silent Auction, the Wonder Works Dinner & Magic Show, the Annual Multiples Judging Contest, and Tours of attractions, shops, the Kennedy Space Center and of course Disney World!

To Register visit our website

www.Intltwins.org

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by Joe Rawlinson



Raising Twins Your Own Way

Joe Rawlinson is the father of four children, two boys and identical twin girls. He is the author of two books for fathers of twins, "Dad's Guide to Twins: How to Survive the Twin Pregnancy and Prepare for Your Twins" and "Dad's Guide to Raising Twins: How to Thrive as a Father of Twins." You can find more tips and tricks for preparing for and raising your twins at dadsguidetotwins.com.

There are a lot of different ways that we can parent our twins. It's not always the same with each of our twins, and it's not the same between families. There are lots of opportunities to find advice and examples of what's working out there from other parents of twins. However, you are the parent. Ultimately, you make the decision of what's going to happen in your home, with your family, and with your twins.

Here are ten things to keep in mind of how you can raise your twins your own way and be confident and happy along the way.

1. Learn From Others

Learn from others so that you can get ideas of what to try. If you don't educate yourself on the possibilities, you're going to have to

learn everything from scratch, which you should not have to do. There are great resources in books, online communities, and local parents of multiples groups.

2. Experimental Parenting

Experiment with your parenting to find out what works. Yes, you are a scientist, and you need to experiment to determine what is going to work best for you and for your twins. If you don't try different things, you're not going to know. You may not be having as much success as you think you can with feeding or helping your twins to sleep because you haven't tried something new.

3. Use What Works

Use what works even if you weren't expecting it to be that way. Oftentimes, as parents, we go in with preset expectations of how something should work with our twins, and we are reluctant to change our pattern or our habits when they don't work. We may then try to blame the twins or external circumstances for something not working. So, make sure you are willing to try what's going to work, even if it's not what you started out doing.

4. Abandon Failed Tactics

Be ready to abandon what is working when it stops working. You're going to get very comfortable in certain aspects of parenting your twins. Then in a week or a month, you're going to have to change that completely because it will no longer work. Your twins will have grown. They will have matured. And their needs will have

changed. So be ready to change, and abandon what you were doing in favor of what's going to work tomorrow.

5. Ignore Others

Don't worry about what others are doing. This is your family, and these are your twins. There is no right or wrong way to raise twins. What is right is what is working and what is best for your family.

6. Ask for Help

Ask for help with your twins. Many hands make light work, and this is definitely true with twins. So if you can invite friends or family over to help with your twins during the day or during the night, definitely do it. It'll make things a lot easier for you and your family.

7. Ask Questions

Ask questions of others. This can be with your local multiples group or online forums. There are several groups for parents of twins on Facebook. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Even if these questions have been asked before, you'll get new perspective and new answers that you can apply in your situation.

8. Taking Advice and Comments

Remember others don't understand fully your situation, especially those that do not have twins. Don't take others' comments or judgments personally. Frankly, many people are often ignorant of

the reality of having twins, and so their suggestions or advice may be completely out of whack. It may not fit your situation or their comments about what they think is possible may be completely beyond reality. So, remember that others do not have your situation. They do not have your perspective, especially those that have never had twins before.

9. Stay Positive

Focus on the positive. You are going to have small wins and small victories each day with your twins. You just have to look for them. Even in the most overwhelming and most complicated days that you have with your twins, something will have gone right. Focus on those small wins and things that did go well to help build up your confidence with your twins. Day by day, your twins are going to become more self-sufficient in eating, sleeping, and living. As they mature, it will make life more manageable for you.

10. Love Your Twins

Regardless of how you raise your twins or your parenting style, love your twins. Do all you can to help them be successful in your family.

You're going to find what works for your family and what works for your twins. Are you going to raise your twins just like somebody else? No. You'll take pieces of what works and apply it in your family. Enjoy the journey of parenting twins! ♥

Announcing the 55th Annual Multiples of America Convention Cincinnati, Ohio

Pre-convention : Sunday, July 26 - Tuesday, July 28, 2015
Convention: Wednesday, July 29 - Saturday, August 1, 2015



The **Millennium Hotel Cincinnati** will be our host with a room rate of \$139, single to quad occupancy. This modern Cincinnati hotel, set in the heart of the city, offers spacious accommodations, rooftop pool and sundeck, fitness center, business center, and a range of amenities to choose from .

Located in downtown Cincinnati, the Millennium is within close range of shops, museums, restaurants and entertainment venues. Meanwhile, just a short drive away are such renowned attractions as The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens and The Beach Waterpark. Within walking distance of over 50 restaurants, shops, and the Great American Ball Park, the home of the Cincinnati Reds Baseball team.

Downtown is compact and walkable, and includes a multi-block riverfront entertainment district called The Banks, Cincinnati's river- front eating and entertainment destination., which boasts a unique mix of dining, shopping and night-life.

For information contact: convention2015@multiplesofamerica.org



by Karen Jobalia, M.D.

Pain Management

SHOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT EPIDURALS?

Three years ago expectant mother-to-twins Leah Casuto, woke early in the morning of her scheduled C-section. When she glanced out the window to check the weather, she was shocked to see there had been a snowstorm. Mounds of white heaped over streets and lawns, cloaking the neighborhood.

Her husband, Scott, managed through sheer force of will to get her to Bethesda Oak Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, on time. Unfortunately, her obstetrician was snowed in. Hours drifted by. Leah was no longer on Terbutaline, the drug preventing her from going into labor. She hadn't expected to need it. So

while Leah waited for her obstetrician, labor contractions started.

At first she ignored them. She had experienced contractions on and off for months. But the contractions grew stronger until it was apparent she was in full-blown labor. Anxiously, she talked the situation over with her nurse, since there were still no obstetricians in the hospital. She made the decision to go through a "trial of

labor" to see if she could deliver her twins vaginally.

Now, in labor, Leah had to make a choice she had not been prepared for: What form of pain relief should she use during delivery? Should she ask for an epidural? If she had had the C-section as scheduled, she would have an epidural or spinal without question. But she really hadn't explored other helpful techniques like meditation or breathing methods. What about other drugs? Leah regretted not thinking about this earlier.

Pregnant mothers of twins usually decide in advance whether they will be having a C-section or vaginal delivery. Those planning a vaginal delivery have a big decision to make about pain relief during labor. Those planning a C-section may have enough information about epidurals before the big day.

Getting an epidural (or a spinal) can be a scary event, and unnecessary fears may be avoided if women are informed.

WHAT IS AN EPIDURAL?

Dr. Phillip Bridenbaugh, president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists and editor of the book "Neural Blockade" the definitive book about pain management, describes an epidural as a tiny tube placed into the spinal fluid. A small amount of medicine is injected and runs through the tube in a continuous, slow drip.

The medicine is usually similar to Novocain but sometimes is an opiate, like morphine. It temporarily numbs the roots coming from the spinal cord, stopping pain and other sensations. Higher doses can numb the nerve roots more, preventing leg movements.

HOW IS A SPINAL DIFFERENT?

A spinal is a similar method of pain control. It involves a single injection of the same medicine into (instead of outside) the sac containing the spinal fluid. It causes complete numbness and is safe. It works well for scheduled C-sections or pain during delivery, but not as well for labor pain with vaginal deliveries. This is because it is given as a single dose that only lasts for a set amount of time, typically two to three hours. Labor often lasts much longer.

Kerri Hardage delivered her twin girls by C-section at 34 weeks gestation. She had heard of a class about epidurals, but didn't sign up for it because she felt her decision had been made. She knew a C-Section would be done. When she arrived a Fort Walton Beach Medical Center in Florida, her heart raced when she thought of a long needle entering her spine. She wondered if it could cause nerve damage. The catheter placed into her bladder surprised her, though it was a routine

Karen Jobalia, M.D.,
of Cincinnati, Ohio, is a radiologist who works with many parents expecting multiples. She is the mother of one daughter.

procedure. The C-Section and spinal went fine, but she would have felt less anxious had she known more about the pain management techniques and procedures that would be used.

Kathy Adachi, on the other hand, carefully researched her epidural choices before her scheduled C-Section for her twins at 38 weeks gestation. She found an anesthesiologist in advance with whom she was comfortable, one recommended by friends. She felt relaxed when she arrived at the Santa Monica/UCLA hospital, knowing exactly what would happen.

AN INFORMED DECISION

So, what does one really need to know to make an informed decision about epidurals? Mothers expecting twins have special reasons to consider epidurals for vaginal deliveries. For one, they are more likely to end up having a C-section as there is a greater likelihood of complications delivering multiples. Dr. Bridenbaugh says that once an epidural is in place, no further steps need to be taken if a C-section is required. If a pregnant mother of twins tries natural labor with no epidural, and she ends up needing a C-section, an epidural or spinal has to be put in fast, or she may end up “knocked out” with a general anesthetic.

Women delivering twins may likely end up needing a forceps delivery. Epidurals are especially good for forceps deliveries because they cause the muscles around the vagina to relax more completely, as well as eliminate the pain caused by the forceps.

Mothers of twins also may need “manual” help delivering the placenta. This is when an obstetrician removes the placenta by hand. Difficulties can occur because the placenta is usually bigger with twins, and sometimes there are two placentas. Epidurals protect against pain in this often unexpected procedure. Prolonged labor is another issue. Many women delivering twins choose epidurals when in prolonged labor rather than relying on natural techniques, such as breathing methods, which are hard to sustain for long periods of time.

Should you worry about injury from an epidural? Dr. Bridenbaugh says that serious or permanent injury to the nerve roots is extremely rare: one in around 40,000 to 60,000 patients. An infrequent complication is a dural puncture, which is a temporary tiny hole in the dura mater surrounding the spinal cord. This may cause a headache after the procedure. However, headaches are much less common after epidurals than they are after spinals.

Epidurals are the best method of pain relief available for labor. While her obstetrician was stuck in the snow, Leah decided to use an epidural while she tried delivering vaginally. She had felt moderately painful contractions for months while she was on bed rest. When she received the epidural, the pain relief was so complete and immediate she described her feeling as euphoric. She said she finally realized how much pain she had been in all along, and, at that moment, she felt total relief.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS AVAILABLE

What about other pain relief options? Intravenous narcotics, which are occasionally used, can cause nausea, itching and sleepi-

ness. They are generally safe, but many women still experience significant pain with these drugs. They are not as safe for mothers who have premature babies. These drugs can depress babies’ functions, and premature babies need to be at their best during delivery. Prematurity is another reason to consider an epidural. The easy decision to use an epidural ensures that intravenous narcotics are avoided.

Some women look forward to the experience of “natural” childbirth. This requires the most planning prior to the big event. Natural childbirth can be a great way to involve one’s partner in the delivery. Women who experience natural childbirth often report a great sense of accomplishment and may have faster deliveries. However, mothers of twins need to be aware that they have higher odds of prolonged labor. Because of the higher rate of twin deliveries that convert to C-Section, often times a lot of women will end up with an epidural or spinal anyway.

Can epidurals harm the babies? No. Only tiny amounts of the medicine are absorbed into the mother’s blood stream. In this quantity, the medication has virtually no effect on the baby, and it is safe.

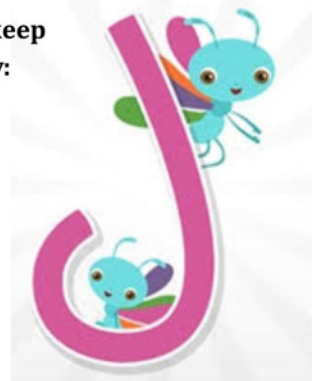
Pregnant mothers of twins often get epidurals, as do mothers who already have had twins and are pregnant with another child. Learning the basic facts about epidurals may ease some fears and help with decision making. Those who use epidurals should do so without guilt, disappointment or fear that they are harming their babies. ♥

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 **Jumelle**



Capturing Summer's Bounty

MAKING YOUR OWN BABY FOOD

Shelly Whitman

Colony is a freelance writer and mother of twin boys from Beaverton, Oregon.

Early on summer mornings, growing up, my brother and I would loop buckets through big leather belts and help my mother pick the fruits and vegetables that would become our winter provender—strawberries and raspberries, peas, beans, carrots, beets, corn. Everything we needed was at Buck's Gardens, a truck farm on the Flathead River. Later in the afternoon my brother and I sat on the lawn, the hose running between us as we scrubbed tub after tub of carrots and beets while my mother readied the canning jars. At the end of the day, I would stand on the old kitchen chair and count the brightly colored jars cooling on a faded towel and feel a great satisfaction at my role in providing for our family. I continue that tradition my making my own baby food.

Babies may indicate a readiness for solids by showing an interest in your food, but don't jump the gun. "Unless there's a medical reason for starting sooner, we recommend not starting solids until 4 to 6 months of age," said Dr. Douglas Hamill, physician with Kaiser Permanente's Department of Pediatrics

in Beaverton, Oregon. "Start with rice cereal, then progress to fruits, then the yellow vegetables. Hold off on citrus, green vegetables and legumes such as peas until baby is a little older," Dr. Hamill added.

My 5-month-old twins eat the equivalent of 45 4-ounce jars of commercial baby food in a month. I can make that same amount of food using local organic produce for less than \$10.00. Here's how... Wash, peel and core the fruit or vegetable. Steam or cook food in a little water. Sweet potatoes and squash are good candidates for baking. Do not add sugar, salt or seasonings. When tender, remove from heat and puree the food in a blender or food processor. Add the liquid from cooking to achieve the desired consistency. The younger your child is, the smoother the food should be.

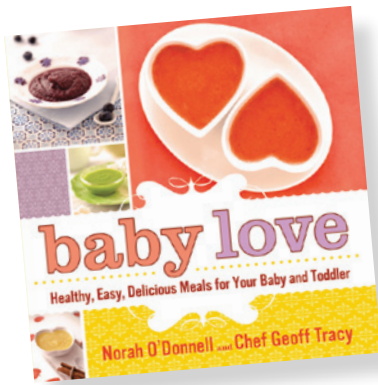
Pureed food can be stored in the refrigerator for three days, or in the freezer for one to two months. I place tablespoon-size servings on a cookie sheet lined with waxed paper and freeze, then transfer the individual servings to a Ziploc freezer bag. Making my own baby food is a memorable way of providing for my little boys. ♥

Join the Revolution

AND TRY SOME OF THESE BABY
FOOD RECIPES FROM THE
COOKBOOK 'BABY LOVE'

"Baby Love" is a cookbook co-written by parents of twins, Norah O'Donnell (CBS News) and her husband, celebrity Chef Geoff Tracy. This fabulous cookbook contains more than sixty gourmet inspired recipes and dozens of Chef Geoff's tips for quick and nutritious preparation.

'Baby Love' also includes some great tasting, healthy and easy recipes for mom and dad, too! Recipes like fish tacos, spaghetti and meatballs with ricotta & basil and pan roasted salmon with lentils, rice, French beans and spinach pesto are just a few.



CHEAP, CHEAP, CHEAP

Making your own baby food can really save your family money and these dramatic cost-savings are also an added bonus for families trying to feed twins or more. Did you know that making fresh baby food is less expensive than mass produced food and in some cases as much as 80% cheaper? A diet of Baby Love Chicken

Soup, Perfectly Basic Carrot and Perfectly Basic Apple for six months would cost about \$520.00 (\$260.00 per baby). Store bought jarred foods would cost about \$1,300.00 (\$650.00 per baby) for the same amount of food.

“You would be amazed at how much money a family can save, especially with twins. There is now expensive frozen baby food you can purchase that is 45 cents per ounce—that’s more than \$7.00 per pound. Can you imagine paying \$7.00 per pound for pureed carrots and filtered water?” Not if you put it that way...

Norah also let us know that ‘Baby Love’ is pretty green, too. “It is amazing how much more garbage our family began producing when we had our twins. I had to order extra garbage and recycling bins from the city. Stinky diapers, wipes, formula containers, gifts, toys, cardboard...it all adds up,” says O’Donnell. “If your twins eat the mass produced mush at the rate of six jars of baby food per day (three each), you’ll be recycling 1,080 glass jars before their first birthday.” You can read more about ‘Baby Love’ and order a copy by visiting www.baby-lovefoods.com. The book is available for \$19.99 at stores like: Amazon, Books-A-Million, Powell’s, Walmart, and Barnes & Noble. ♥

Cinnamon apple oatmeal raisin



Serving Size
Yields 36 ounces for 8 months plus.

Ingredients

- 4 apples
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 12 ounces water or apple juice
- 1/2 cup baby oatmeal cereal

Preparation

Wash and peel the apples (peeling is optional). Cut each apple in half. Remove the seeds and stem with a melon baller. Cut each half into 6 pieces. Put the apple pieces, raisins, cinnamon, and water into a 4-quart pot. Turn the burner on high and cover with a lid. Cook for approximately 7 minutes, stirring once. Add the oatmeal and cook for 1 more minute, stirring throughout the final minute. Pour everything into

the blender. Puree until smooth. Pour into two ice cube trays and allow to cool. Wrap and freeze.

Tips

Baby gets a little spice! Aromatics make food delightful. Just because your little one is eight months old doesn’t mean life needs to be bland. Watch the dried fruits or be prepared to scrub... I use dried fruits in a number of recipes. When I do, I increase the amount of liquid in the recipe. This prevents the recipe from burning the bottom of your pot. Keep an extra eye on recipes that have dried fruit to make sure they don’t cook down too quickly. It is a mess to clean if they do. But I only have regular raisins! It is just a recipe... modify it any way you want. That’s cooking!

Carrot and Ginger

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds carrots
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 20 ounces water



Preparation

- Put the water into a 4-quart pot and heat on high. Wash and then peel the carrots.
- Cut off the stems and discard. Cut the carrots lengthwise and then cut each length into 8 or 10 pieces.
- Peel the ginger and mince (see notes below). Throw the carrot and ginger into the pot and cook 6 to 8 minutes. The carrots should be tender but not mushy.
- Pour the entire contents of the pot into the blender. Puree until smooth. Pour into two ice cube trays and allow to cool.
- Wrap and freeze.

Perfectly Basic Pea

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds frozen peas (that’s usually 1 1/2 bags)
- 8 ounces water

You’ll need

- Colander
- Large bowl filled with ice and cold water. You want as much ice as possible.

Preparation: Fill a 4-quart pot halfway with water. Bring to a rolling boil.

While water is coming to a boil, get your “green veggie shocking station” ready.

Pour the frozen peas into the colander. Run cool water over them to get rid of any ice crystals (which will allow the boiling water to come back to a boil faster).

Pour the peas into the boiling water.

Cook for 3 minutes on highest heat.

Pour peas into colander. Run cold water over them and pour them into the ice bath.

Allow the peas to chill for 3 minutes. Pour the peas back into the colander and pick out any remaining ice.

Pour peas in the blender and add 8 ounces of cold water. Puree until smooth.

Pour into two ice cube trays.

Wrap and freeze.

Serving Size

Yield 32 ounces for 6 months plus





TIPS, Tricks, & Training

Using Love and Logic to
Parent Toddler Twins!



by Sharon Withers

Toddlers are known for their “No’s!” and they can gang up on you faster than you can run in two different directions at once. Charles Fay, Ph.D., a psychologist and principal at Love and Logic Institute, likens toddlers to tornadoes... so does that mean with twins you have “Twin Tornadoes?”

If Dr. Fay’s name sounds familiar, it’s probably because he has spoken at numerous National Organization of Mothers of Twins (NOMOTC) now Multiples of America’s (MOA) annual conventions and at several twins clubs meetings across the country.

“What we teach at Love and Logic, a program that gives parents tools and techniques for building healthy relationships, is that parents should pray every day that their children make small mistakes when they’re young,” Dr. Fay said. “Love and Logic is about adults modifying their behavior and being good

to themselves. When we’re really healthy—calm, empathetic, assertive—children have good role models.”

CAUSE & EFFECT

The philosophy is, children learn the best lessons when they’re allowed to make their own choices and fail when the cost of failure is still small. Children’s failures must be coupled with love and empathy from their parents. And this approach, according to Fay, can begin as early as 8 to 9 months of age—and certainly by toddlerhood. Here’s how and why.

“The goal is getting your kids to understand cause and effect. You want them to know that when they make a poor decision, their life is unhappy,” Fay explained.

But at 9-months-old? “You have your two little guys sitting in their high chairs. The train is in the tunnel. Then ‘pleeh!’ One of them spits beets all over you,” Fay said. “Love and Logic

calls for sadness, not anger. We want our children to know that we love them unconditionally, regardless of bad decisions. So you say, 'Oh no, honey. That is so sad. Looks like lunch is over.' You're not mad, and the consequence is logical."

The same applies to the game of drop-and-fetch. When your toddlers drop their spoons from the high chair to the floor over and over again, they're doing many things. They're experimenting and learning... having fun... engaging you in their game. "It's healthy for kids to do experiments. They need to do these things, and it's fine until it becomes a problem for them or for you. You need to know where your line is... when it is no longer cute and you need to draw the line. With toddlers, the consequence needs to be immediate. (Delayed consequences don't work until children are 3 or 4 years old.)

"What we see happening more and more is kids are involved in healthy experimenting but parents never set limits. Then toddlers are running the house, and later you have a teenage tyrant. Love and Logic teaches self-discipline," Fay said. Although kids can push your buttons and frustrate you—which they love to do and see—parents can have the self-control they need if they have some very practical parenting skills.

THREE SIMPLE TECHNIQUES

Parents of very young kids—kids small enough to be carried—can think in terms of mastering 3 simple techniques...

- 1. Change your location:** If your kids are screaming, skip the attempt to reason and go into another room. You might say, "I don't like this screaming, so I think I'll leave the room." Say no more.
- 2. Change the location of the problem object.** Take away a sharp stick or a toy truck that your twin is banging against the wall, or on his brother's back. Don't get angry and lecture or shout. "The more words we use when our kids act up, the less effective we become. Children learn consequences best when you don't get angry or use too many words," Fay explained.
- 3. Change the child's location.** Remove the misbehaving child to a safe place. With twins, you need two separate locations, since one twin often acts up as soon as his twin goes to timeout!

TIMEOUT GUIDELINES

Fay offers three guidelines for timeouts. First, time-in should be really fun. "When we are with our kids and they are behaving well we should be warm, affectionate, and even silly."

Next, timeout should remove the child from all stimulation and attention, from you or his twin. "The more words we use, the more attention the child gets." Fay explained. "It is good to have one cue word, such as 'uh-oh,' for timeout. Then calmly tell your child, 'You can come out when you are sweet.'"

Finally, the child stays in timeout until he calms down. "The message should be, 'I get to be with other people when I am nice,'" Fay said.

But what about the popular rule, one minute for every year of age? "That's the biggest joke I've ever heard!" exclaimed Fay. "How many 3-year-olds calm down in three minutes?" If they come out of timeout before they are calm, they learn that they don't have to behave to join the family.

MORE TECHNIQUES

If parents have a few cue words, such as 'oh, no,' and 'uh-oh,' toddlers have a favorite: "No!" This is one instance where it's good to give some kids control. "All humans crave control," Fay said. "Give your toddlers control over lots of little choices." He told of a twin girl, quite dominant over her more passive twin sister. They were enjoying a tea party when strong-willed little Hillary spilled water on her shirt and started screaming because she was wet. Her mother chased her around with a dry shirt, but Hillary only screamed, "No!" Grandpa intervened: "Hillary, do you want some tea or milk? Do you want to sit in the chair on the right or the chair on the left? Do you want to put your left arm or your right arm in the shirt first? Hillary stuck out her right arm, unaware she had been had.

Just make sure that all the choices you offer your twins are acceptable to you. Little choices—peas or carrots, milk or juice, red shirt or blue shirt—break down toddler resistance. And, there is an upside to the negative responses. "No! is good," said Fay. "You want them to know how to say 'No' to drugs later in life." Differing temperaments in twins presents another challenge. When one child needs much attention to discipline them, the other can get left in the shadows. "Spend as much time as you can with the one who doesn't misbehave," Fay suggested. "If one is physically aggressive to the other, separate them because it can create resentment on the part of the more passive twin."

What about double tantrums in a store? Fay told of one mother who let 16-month-old twins toddle alongside the shopping cart, unless they got out of control. She also had a stroller with her. When they misbehaved, one went in the cart and the other in the stroller. If they screamed, she made light of it by saying to other shoppers, "I bet you're glad they're not your kids." That takes guts, and thick skin. The alternative, to leave the store, gives tremendous power to the kids, Fay said.

MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

"I am constantly amazed by the challenges multiples place on parents," Fay said. "With twins, I like to say that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It's like water torture: Twin toddlers do things that are not so bad, but they add up.

"It just takes a whole lot more patience and skills to parent twins," Fay admitted. Therefore, parents of multiples need to be open to learning more parenting skills and a variety of techniques. They need to know what works for each twin, especially if their twins have different temperaments. "Parents of twins need a toolbox and they need to experiment." ♥

For more information on Love and Logic visit www.loveandlogic.com or call (800) LUV-LOGIC.



by Lawrence J. Schweinhart



Family Fun this summer

Tips on How to Plan Your
Next Family Vacation with
Pre-School Twins!

Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Ph.D., was co-director for the Center for the Study of Public Policies for Young Children at the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan and is co-author of the book *Young Children Grow Up: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths through Age 15*.

A satisfying family vacation does not begin when parents and children leave home, but when they first start thinking about the trip and discussing it as a family. The more everyone learns about where they are going before they get there, the greater sense of anticipation.

A marked difference can exist though, between the idea and the reality of a family vacation because usual daily routines are broken and the family has more togetherness. These trips can draw a family closer together and help parents see their children in a different light.

But most vacation travel takes place in a vehicle that confines its occupants to the equivalent of a very small room with two couches in it! This continuous intimacy with other family members, the ongoing necessity to meet basic survival needs, and the need to choose among the interesting alternatives that present themselves to the family make it imperative that families impose their own set of rules on all members of the travelling troupe! If families don't discover these rules and follow them, the enjoyment of their vacation can be lost.

VACATION RULES

The vacationing family must continue to meet its needs for food, shelter, and sanitation. It has been commonly said that vehicular motion provokes young children to demonstrate immediate needs for food, drink and roadside facilities! Finicky eaters must face limited choices. Even the best motel bed is not quite as comfortable as the one at home. The only rules for such situations are to exercise prudence and a saint-like patience.

CLOSENESS

Though spending time together is one of the most enjoyable aspects of a family vacation, as the experience progresses, it is good to occasionally break out of the imposed intimacy. Twins constantly face competition for the attention of their parents; if possible, Mom may take one twin, and Dad take his co-twin to make each twin's day one of special moments for parents and each twin alike. Being alone with one parent can be a revitalizing experience.

CHOOSING ACTIVITIES

A family vacation often means family members must choose from among many often equally interesting alternatives. Before they even begin, the family must decide as a group where they are going, or at least in what direction; what activities to plan in advance; and how long you will travel.

Since the intimacy of a vacation intensifies emotions, keep an open mind and try to cooperate with others. This is particularly difficult for young children, but parents can make it easier by being reasonable and willing to compromise, thereby setting a good example for them to follow.

Different families approach planning and problem-solving in different ways. Probably all families have some blend of an authoritarian and a democratic approach, with some weighted more heavily on one side or the other.

AGE APPROPRIATE VACATIONS

Whether parents make the decisions and then tell their children, or the children are involved in a least some minor family decisions, the needs of all family members must be taken into

account. For example, a day at a museum can be taxing for a small child. Parents of young children can put vacations in perspective if they realize that the trips will be different as children mature and grow.

The best vacations for children younger than three-years-old are either to visit relatives, or to have good sensory experiences, such as those offered by a farm, a children's zoo or at the beach.

Three and four-year-olds will also enjoy such vacations, but can appreciate a greater variety of sensory experiences as well, as long as they do not demand a lot of patience. The concrete experiences of hands-on museums (not the scientific principles) are appropriate for preschoolers who also can delight in children's sections of amusement parks. Informal family tours of cities

can be fun for them, as long as what they see and do engages their senses.

Human development does not end when children become adults, of course. Adults should be sensitive to their own needs and use vacations to serve those interests, as well as those of their children. The well-functioning family is one that balances the desires of all its members. ♥

Summer Travel Smarts

Ways to protect your phone on vacation



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

(Family Features) The kids are out of school and you've been stockpiling your vacation time for months. It's prime time to hit the road (or skies) for a well-deserved getaway. But before you dust off that suitcase, take some time to assess the protection of one of your most valuable travel tools — your smartphone.

YOUR PERSONAL TRAVEL GUIDE

A recent survey conducted by Asurion, the recognized industry leader in technology protection, found that 77 percent of travelers say their phone is either "very" or "extremely" important to have while traveling. In fact, 46 percent of those surveyed revealed they use their mobile phone to research vacation information, such as destinations and deals. Other popular uses include booking transportation tickets, making dining reservations and using special travel-related apps downloaded to their phone.

PROTECTING YOUR PHONE

It's easy to see that smartphones are critical for summer travel. Since nothing ruins a vacation like a lost, stolen or damaged cellphone, be sure to consider these tips before heading out:

- Use a good screen protector and invest in a quality cover or case. This is an easy and inexpensive way to prevent scratching, cracks and other external damage.
- Invest in mobile protection for your phone with a company such as Asurion, which provides a complete suite of technology protection products to safeguard your family from the disaster of a lost, stolen or damaged cellphone.
- Plug the phone charger into a power surge protector.
- Password-protect your phone. In the event it is lost or stolen, it will be your first line of defense against identity theft.

- Install an anti-theft application on your child's device to locate or lock it and wipe data.
- Back up your child's phone regularly to recover pictures, music and contacts quickly.

DANGEROUS LOCATIONS

Protecting your phone also includes keeping it from thieves. When Asurion asked smartphone users where they experienced the theft of their device, the most common settings were locations that you might find yourself while on vacation, including:

- Restaurant or bar
- Parking lot
- Street or sidewalk
- Public transportation
- Store or mall

TIPS TO PREVENT PHONE THEFT

There are several steps you can take to reduce the risk of smartphone theft, including the following:

- Keep the phone in a pocket or purse where it will be out of site.
- Use a Bluetooth device to be able to keep the phone safely tucked away.
- Use headphones when listening to music.
- Password-protect the phone.
- Be aware of surroundings when in public. Focusing on texting, email, social media or any other mobile application puts users at risk.
- Have an application that will remotely lock the smartphone and wipe the data if necessary.
- Don't set a smartphone out on a table.

For more on how to enhance your summer travels, visit www.Asurion.com.

by Alice M. Vollmar

Helicopter Parenting

Avoiding the Hover-and-Smother Urge!

Most parents of multiples are the center of attention in their circle of friends and their neighborhoods—just because their offspring are multiples. This kind of celebrity status and several other factors discussed below can lead to an unexpected parenting style—over protectiveness.

Because of the potential for destruction that two or more unsupervised little ones can accomplish, “backing off” and letting the suddenly mobile two make “mistakes” is often more freedom than well-meaning parents feel is safe. If the pregnancy was a long and hard-fought physical experience and/or the babies were premature, it may also be emotionally difficult to “let go,” even when it may be developmentally appropriate to do so.

Experts say parents must find a “medium ground;” however, that medium ground between concerned care for children’s well-being

and overprotective hovering—termed by some as “helicopter parenting”—is sometimes hard to find. Parenting books define “overprotection” as doing for a child what he is capable of doing himself. In that context, most parents are overprotective now and then: It’s when those incidents become pervasive that parents create a potentially harmful overprotective environment.

Why does an overprotective environment cause a child harm? Parent-education teacher Eileen Shiff writes in *Experts Advise Parents*, “If we protect him by solving his problems and saving him from the consequences of his mistakes, we leave him weak, vulnerable and dependent. Real protection means strengthening him...so he can cope resourcefully with the challenges that will inevitably confront him.” Sometime between a child’s birth and his adulthood, Shiff adds, “We need to stop trimming his nails, choosing his friends and anticipating his needs.”



But keep in mind that what's considered overprotective in one culture might not be in another, and differs in rural and urban settings, points out Lynn Galle, director of the Institute of Child Development Laboratory Nursery School at the University of Minnesota.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

According to Galle, healthy parenting is "knowing when to nurture and when to let the child do for himself, when to be there so they don't hurt themselves and when to

let them try things." She believes parents should begin backing off from controlling and directing a child's life at least by 18 months or 2 years of age.

Melanie Tuininga adopts that approach with her 20-month-old identical twins, Katie & Kelly, and 4-year-old Emily. To determine what her children are capable of at what age, she reads books and talks to other parents.

"I don't want my children to be dependent on me," states Tuininga. "For example, when I wanted my young kids to learn to play by themselves, I played with them on the floor for 15 minutes or half an hour, then

got up to do something else. I made sure they had plenty of toys; if they cried, I told them, 'Now it's your turn to play.'"

Mary Ann Lee started giving responsibilities to her identical twins, Mary Pat and Mary Kay, now 27-years old, when they were young—from making their beds before they left the house each day to getting themselves out the door and to school on time. "We did set guidelines and had rules, and maybe we were a little overprotective in some areas. We always wanted to know where they were and who they were with, but we also expected them to make decisions and think for themselves rather than just going along with the crowd." Lee says whatever they did must have worked: Her twins went off to college, paid for their own college educations, are now kindergarten teachers, and lead independent lives.

That's the kind of healthy outcome parents envision for their twins. Ironically, overprotection, instead of shielding children from difficulties, makes it harder for them to deal with challenges and live independently, says Glenace Edwall, director of psychology services at Minneapolis Children's Medical Center.

EFFECTS OF OVERPROTECTING

"Overprotection doesn't allow the child to develop a sense of herself and play that out," notes Edwall. There's too much parent and not enough child in the self."

In general, children react in two basic ways to overprotection, says Edwall. "Either the child will be shy, withdraw and have difficulty in social situations, or he or she will rebel, push at limits and engage in a power struggle." Both behaviors signal that the child feels inadequate to meet challenges and master fears.

Edwall encourages overprotective parents to take the focus off their own fears and take pride in their children's developmental progress. "Kids pick up parents' anxieties," says Edwall. "Anxious adults have anxious children."

WHAT MAKES PARENTS OVERPROTECTIVE

"Anxious, overprotective parents often feel vulnerable themselves," according to Edwall. Overprotection also may be tied to the current trend toward better educated, older parents with fewer children, notes Adam P. Matheny, Jr., Ph.D., in an article for TWINS™ Magazine called, "Fighting the Overprotective Urge." They may "invest more emotions and resources in a smaller family" and/or be more aware of potential problems, he adds.

OVERPROTECTION OR COMMON SENSE?

Nancy Herman's 4-year-old twins, Amanda and Thomas, were premature and in intensive care for two weeks after their births. Subsequently, she was very particular about who got to see them and who could come to the house. "We didn't go where anyone had been ill; and if my husband was exposed to a cold at work, he didn't go near

the twins," recalls Herman. "I didn't take them out much until they were 6-months old."

When they went to Sunday school at age 2, if someone had a bad cold, Herman took the twins to church with them. "I still do that," she says.

"They do get to do things on their own, but I'm still really cautious," says Herman. "I think you have to be overly cautious when you have premature babies—you've got to protect them. You've gone through so much to get them here, and you are the one who can protect them. It's a fine line between what I do being related to their being premature and what is just common sense."

IF YOU HAVE BEEN OVERPROTECTIVE

If you tend to be overprotective, suggests Edwall, find ways to gradually let go. (See 'Stopping the Cycle' side-bar.) Even ill or sickly children need to be given age-and

situation appropriate responsibilities and activities, stresses Edwall, who has observed a tendency for parents to indulge them.

"Do what you can to encourage your twins to do things alone and with others, and tell them how mature and responsible they are being by staying in their own beds, for instance," she adds.

EASING GUILT FEELINGS

Parents who hover may initially feel guilty about stepping back and letting their twins make mistakes or experience the natural consequences of their actions. It's wise to remember that any change is likely to trigger new feelings and some internal resistance. Edwall advises talking to relatives and friends about their child-rearing experiences or finding a parent support group to hear different parenting perspectives. ♥

Alice M. Vollmar, a freelance writer living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the mother of six children, including fraternal twins.

Give Yourself a 3-Point Overprotective Check-Up!

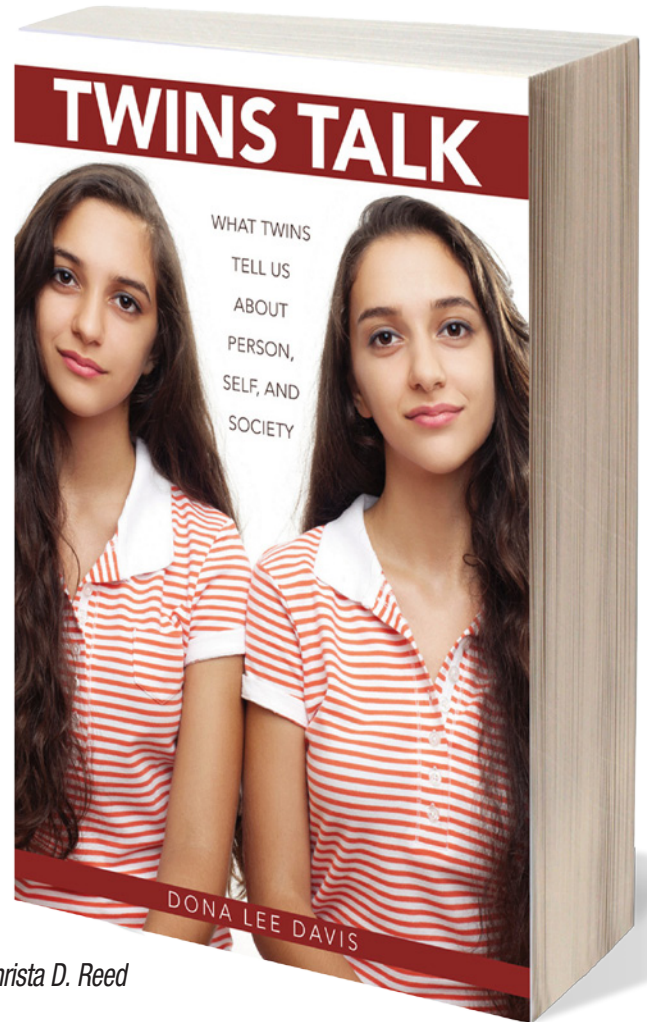
1. Do you help your twins before they ask for help?
2. If you are concerned that your twins can't do a task, do you step in to do it for them?
3. Do you have rules and restrictions for everything? It's okay to be restrictive on a few things that matter to you, such as not allowing your twins to see violent movies, says Lynn Galle, of the University of Minnesota. But if you have lots of strict rules, she adds, "You may want to step back and look at what you are doing. If you are too controlling, your kids may become deceitful to circumvent rules which set them apart from their peers."

Stopping the Cycle

Experts interviewed for this story offer the following tips to counter overprotective parenting:

- Stop doing everything for your children. Follow child development guidelines and give your twins tasks and responsibilities appropriate to their age. Keep the focus on their progress rather than their mistakes.
- Encourage your twins to try appropriate new things. Say "What a responsible, big kid you are to be trying to tie your shoes all by yourself!"
- Begin to let relatives and friends babysit your premature twins. Then, gradually move to a wider circle of sitters.
- Allow your children to make mistakes and discuss what they've learned from them.
- Establish a limited number of rules/restrictions that really matter to you—such as watching only nonviolent TV shows or doing homework before playing with friends.
- Encourage social skills by arranging for supervised play with other children by age 2. By age 3, involve your twins in organized activity such as a neighborhood play group.
- Treat life experiences such as going to school, bedtime and meals in a positive, matter-of-fact way.
- Redirect your own fears and uncertainties into appreciation for your twins' progress and growth.

Twins Talk



by Christa D. Reed

What Do Twins Tell Us About Person, Self and Society?

Our Interview with Author and Twin Dona Lee Davis...

Over the years, there has been numerous books published about twins from researchers, anthropologists and other “experts” that typically focus on the behavior and science of twins. In the new book *“Twins Talk”* by Dona Lee Davis (now available in our online store), she presents a unique perspective because she focuses on what twins actually say about themselves. She considers the 22 sets of identical twins she interviewed for this book as the ‘local experts’ on twins and twinship because their knowledge comes from first hand, life long experience. I had the pleasure of being able to interview Dona Lee Davis, the author who is also an identical twin and anthropologist.

TWINS: *As an identical twin yourself, after writing this book, what was the greatest lesson you learned about being a twin and your twinship with your twin sister?*

When Dorothy and I began our interviews with the Twinsburg twins, it was the first time we had ever sat down with another set of twins to talk about being twins. While we had a sense of ourselves as twins, we had no sense of what it means to be twins as a category of people. Our self-awareness developed from a focus on

our own experiences of twinship to a heightened understanding of twinship and how our society views twins in general. While we had regarded the former as rather unique to ourselves, we began to develop an appreciation of what identical twins (as twins) had in common with each other. These commonalities are embedded in being identical or looking alike, but they are also expressed and played out within wider, more encompassing cultural contexts, where twins are often placed on the fault lines of identity when it comes to accepted notions of self and personhood.

As our understanding of twinship evolved beyond our own personal experiences, we began to appreciate the wider aspects of twinship that seemed to be shared by twins in the US regardless of age, social class or ethnicity. The Twinsburg twins taught us a great deal about ourselves and our twinship. For example, we anticipated that our talking partners would not find us ‘identical’ enough, so we brought pictures taken at various parts of our lives to Twinsburg with us. While there was interest in the photos, respondents assured us that there was no need to prove our twinship; the fact that we were doing this together was proof enough.

At the three twins festivals we attended, we learned to celebrate our mutuality and developed an appreciation of how twinship as a form of togetherness (even when you live apart) develops over the life cycle. Taking some attitude from our talking partners, we



actually became rather militant about our status of being twins in a singleton world. Doing the interviews and attending twins festivals has inspired us to spend more time together (like our twin role models were doing). This is especially true as we are retiring and making plans to live closer together.

TWINS: You pose the question “What is a lived life like when there is someone who is walking around with your face--the primary identifier of your body self?” What did you discover was the answer to this question?

In the end of the book I mention how *Twins Talk* had its genesis in a conversation with a Norwegian (Marit Elverland) anthropology student who was also a twin. As we talked about being twins, despite the cultural differences, I came to appreciate that my experience of twinship was different than hers. This was mainly because Dorothy and I looked alike and were difficult to tell apart, while Marit and her sister look very different from each other. A societal tendency to conflate or confuse twins' identities is a challenge that identical twins face. (I would say it is the same if you are fraternal twins but easily mistaken for each other.) *Twins Talk* reveals that twins can be frustrated by others confusing their identity, but also take joy in the process in educating the gaze of others by providing clues for telling them apart. I use the idea of a twin game to actually argue that as twins mine their bodies for signs or signs of distinctiveness, such as football versus basketball eyes, identical twins, I would argue actually have a more finely tuned sense of the distinctiveness of their bodies than is the case for singletons. Of course one must not forget that the study participants came from the Twinsburg Twin's festival, where twins revel in their likeness and go to considerable measures to look alike. As any anthropologist would understand there is no single response to your questions but multiple ones. We often think of identical twins as cute children, but our informants are all adults. Like Dorothy and I, our older twin talking partners were fascinated at how their aging bodies were so much alike. Again *Twins Talk* is

unique in the twin literature as it features adult twins at different stages of the life cycle and sets twins forth as the 'experts.'

TWINS: When selecting the 22 sets of twins for your study, how did you find your “subjects” to interview and did you have an equal amount of men and women? Can you give us an idea of demographics for your study?

Our sample was opportunistic and voluntary. The Twinsburg Twins Festival is rather unique in that it offers opportunities for researchers to access large samples of twins. After our study proposal was 'approved' by the Twinsburg research committee, we set up a booth in what was called the Research Pavilion. My student, Kristi Cody, recruited adult twins who were milling through the Pavilion and were interested in participating in some of the studies on offer. Kristi scheduled appointments and we interviewed one set of twins after another for over 12 hours. We used five questions that kept the interviews lively and flowing. I have never interviewed such an enthusiastic and supportive population. Demographics include 3 sets of men, and 19 sets women. For purposes of analyses the following age categories made sense: 22-26 (n-5); 36-46 (n-7); 54-58 (n-5); and 61-77 (n 6). The twins came from a variety of ethnic, regional and social class backgrounds. There was no attempt to recruit a representative sample. Those who decided not to participate, either did not want to spare the time, preferred to participate in studies where they were being paid or compensated, or did not take our study seriously. The fact that our interviews were filled with laughter probably did not recommend us to the more 'serious twins.' We prided ourselves on being the only twins conducting research in the Pavilion and for privileging what twins say about themselves instead of what researchers want to know about them. Because we were peers interviewing peers and our informants tended to take charge of the interview, we called our study participants "talking partners." As we say in the social sciences the data came from the ground up.

TWINS: Who were the most memorable sets of twins you interviewed and why do they stick out in your mind?

They are all memorable. I have never done a qualitative study where so many of the participants figure so prominently and equally in the text. Certainly one of the most dynamic interviews was with Karan, Kim, Sandy and Cindy. They were two sets of twins from the same family. While Karan and Kim liked being twins Sandy and Cindy did not. Twins like Jenna, Steph, Lucy and Linda told stories of difficult childhoods that brought tears to our eyes. Tim and Tom, who kept asking 'why', were our 'intellectuals'. Karen and Kristy were so funny in their depictions of being the good and evil twins that they had all of the researchers surrounding us laughing along with us. Accounts of Judy, Janet, Pete and Emil and were poignant because one twin had become the caretaker or helper with their twin who was challenged by ill health or sickness. Beth, Amy, Dante and Randi stand out as twins who

were negotiating their separate lives, careers and relationships. We certainly identified with twins our own age, such as Pat and Phyllis, who were re-exploring their twinship after families were grown, while at the same time identifying with twins like Tina, Ginuh, Cris, Carla, Mabel and Bertha, who describe how becoming parents affects their twinship and the relationships among their children.. As social workers, Annette and Arnette provided some very interesting insights into how their own twinship has made them better therapists as they have learned how one oscillates between connectedness and drawing away in the therapeutic interview. I am frequently asked by journalists or film makers to provide samples of twins who are 'really weird.' I guess one of the greatest aspects of our sample is that they are ordinary people. They have found a niche in the American cultural context where they can allow their twinship to flourish as a special kind of relationship but at the same time they have successfully realized American norms of individuality.

TWINS: Which set of twins surprised you the most by how they interacted with each other and how they answered your study questions?

This one is easy. It was Karen and Kristy, who portrayed themselves as the good and evil twins. Their interview was high hilarity all around. Lucy and Linda had us handing pictures of themselves as young women around to enthusiastic viewers in neighboring research booths. The other thing that surprised us was the touchy twins; the twins that were constantly stroking and hitting each other. Judy and Janet were celebrating Judy's recovery from cancer. They kissed and stroked each other. Amy and Beth playfully alternately hit and stroked each other throughout the interview. They said that if they could, they would crawl into each other's laps. The four-twin interview with Cindy, Sandy, Kim and Karan was charged in that the older two twins were happy with their twinship and their younger twin sisters were non-or anti-twin in the extreme. What was interesting was that they all had come (the younger ones being pushed) to Twinsburg to celebrate one of the older twin's survival from cancer. No matter what the dynamics of twinship within each dyad, they were certainly all sisters together. Twins talk is filled with humor, deep thoughts, and some of the warmest and most heartfelt statements (I would argue) to be found in ethnography. For example Martha and Mary refer to a future where they are in an old age home... 'if one of us was ever gone, we wouldn't have to tell the other. We'd just put a mirror there.'

TWINS: Were there any identical sets of twins that did not have a strong bond? If so, why?

Yes, Cindy and Sandy, but Dorothy and I thought we could see a great affection between this particular set of twins who seemed to

enjoy their roles as sparring partners. Twins like Mary and Martha had had some hard times or misunderstandings at one point of their lives but had reconciled. As orphans, Steph says that she 'had had it' and ran away from the orphanage, leaving her sister behind. Her sister, Jenna, responds that "she left me for a cup of coffee." Yet, now reunited, they have developed a strong bond, pooling their resources and helping each other with multiple health problems. Born in the Philippines, Helen and Julie (the only twins who dressed alike outside of Twinsburg) were separated at birth but reunited in adulthood. They have dedicated themselves to, first, mutually caring for their ailing mother and, second, to making up for their lost years together.

TWINS: What were some of your favorite twin stories you heard?

I have a section on 'trickster twins' where twins use confusion of identity to play tricks on others. Jeana tells about starting Dina's valedictory lecture in high school. Pat and Phyllis have interesting ESP stories. Judy and Janet tell a heart-warming tale of getting through cancer treatment together. Kristy and Karen make the everyday happenings in life funny.

One of the favorite stories I tell about myself and Dorothy is when our Mother, who always sent us the exact same birthday cards, sent us both a card on our 50 birthday that said 'There is none like you in the whole wide world.' It is ironic but she meant it.

TWINS: Is there anything else you would like to share about your new book with our parents of twins?

To Parents... my suggestion is to take into account of what the 'experts' say but to let your twins guide you as to what is best for them.

When I attended twin research conferences mothers of twin groups were in prominence there. Talking with these mothers I certainly began to appreciate that it must be challenging and bit scary to raise twins. My suggestion is to take into account of what the 'experts' say but

to let your twins guide you as to what is best for them. Twins are a complex phenomenon and twinship is a complex relationship. Just as there are many different ways of being a person there are many different ways of being a twin or twins. I think that the voices of twins, captured in Twins Talk, can introduce parents to both the challenges and joys of being twins. The notions of twindividuals and twindividuality represent an opportunity to bridge the gaps our own society has drawn between autonomy and mutuality and to recognize, not only the special aspects of being twins, but pose a lesson for us all about getting along together. Also remember that the talking partners, who are all adults, agree that twinship, like wine, gets better and better with age. Parents, who are worried about their young children, may take some comfort in this long range viewpoint. ❤️

You can order your copy of "Twins Talk" by visiting our online store: <http://www.twinsmagazine.com/shoppe/twins-talk>

Top Tips

for Encouraging Individuality with Your Twins!



The image features two young girls. The girl on the left is wearing a black leather jacket, sunglasses, and a peace sign, holding a black and yellow electric guitar. The girl on the right is wearing glasses and a blue shirt, sitting on a stack of books and reading. A large, 3D yellow number '6' is positioned between them.

by Dara Lovitz, Esq.,

Try your best to imagine experiencing almost every moment in life with another person who is the same age, has the same number of siblings and parents, has the same last name, lives in your house, goes to the same school, has the same teacher, and goes through life on the same waking, eating, playing, bathing, and sleeping schedule as you. That is how many twins go through their early years of life.

The individuation process that every young child experiences is complicated for twins – they not only have to learn to separate from their parents, they also have to learn to separate from their twin sibling, to whom they are so deeply connected from birth. Parents can impede the process by raising them into existence as a pair of children instead of as two single children. Research suggests that twins who were treated as a solitary unit by their parents had more difficulty forming their individual identities than twins who were treated more distinctly.

It could be argued that parents of twins generally have a more challenging early parenting experience than parents of singletons. There are countless consid-

erations a parent of twins has to make that her parenting peers who have singleton children never face, like spoon-feeding two hungry babies at the same time, maneuvering a double stroller through the supermarket, or (brace yourself) having to choose which child's college graduation to attend when both twins' college graduations occur on the same weekend in different cities.

So what could a parent of twins possibly learn from a parent of singletons? At least one very important thing: how to raise a singleton — well, at least how to make our twin children's experiences more like that of their singleton peers.

Yes, by making some easy adjustments, we parents can help our twin children feel more like unique individuals and less like a mere half of a pair.

In that spirit, I compiled these top 6 tips for encouraging individuality.

RETHINK THE RHYMES

Let's face it: it's cute and it's fun to name your twin children Will and Jill or to use alliteration and call them Beverly and Bella.

When we do this, however, we reinforce the notion that they are each part of a set as opposed to two separate individuals. If you have already chosen such names, perhaps you can give at least one of them a nickname – a nickname that doesn't rhyme with the other child's name, for heaven's sake! Related side note: always refer to your children by their names rather than referring to them as "the twins." And take the time to encourage relatives and friends to respect and follow your lead here. The rule is important whether your children are within earshot or not. It's critical that you and other essential people in their lives develop the habit of talking about them and thinking of them as individuals.

DRESS THEM DIFFERENTLY

Again, the cuteness factor reigns here: who doesn't love the attention one receives when she's walking her twins down the street and they are wearing the same exact outfit, down to the color and brand of shoe? It's undeniably adorable to see little twins dressed alike. Still, by doing so, you are un-

intentionally sending the message to them and the world that they are simply two peas in a pod. Two perfectly identical peas in a pod. But your children are not uniform vegetables; they are exceptional animate beings with distinguishing personalities and traits. If you simply cannot resist putting them in the same outfit for a photo, allow yourself some slack and take the darn photo. But most of your photos should instead help to celebrate them as the extraordinary individuals that they are. When your twins are old enough, encourage them to pick out their own clothes. They may choose to match each other at times, but believe me, there will be times when they want to look nothing like one another.

DON'T FORCE THEM TO SHARE

When we were little, we were taught to share. So when our kids are young, we instinctively tell them they have to share. Sharing is an important skill that young children must develop in order to succeed socially.

BUT, your twins will be asked to share exponentially more times than the average singleton child for the simple reason that twins generally have more opportunities to share by virtue of playing in the same room together for most of their waking hours. And even though one of your twin children will almost always be playing with her twin sibling, she shouldn't always be forced to share. In fact, she should have things that are hers and hers alone — things over which she can rightfully assert jurisdiction. Having one's own things is essential to helping a child develop her sense of self, which is critical for a child who is a twin.

If it's possible financially and logistically to put the twin children in separate rooms, do so to allow each of them to claim her own space. If two separate rooms are not available, try to give each child her own space in the twins' shared room (or in another room). Allow the child to decorate and organize the space as she wishes and support her efforts to 'protect' the space from unwanted intrusion by siblings.

(REALLY) LEARN WHO EACH ONE IS

Relate to, and converse with, your children individually. When your twin children are young, ask them questions about what they like and don't like so that you can learn early on what makes each child tick. Learn (and don't forget!) which child likes which food and which colors and which songs. When you're alone with one of your children, tell him what you've observed about him — tell him which wonderful and distinct attributes about him make you the most proud.

MAKE TIME FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION

In order to really discover each child, you will need alone time with her during which she can feel comfortable to confide in you, without commentary or judgment from another family member. Engaging in separate activities with each child will further help bond you to each child as well as help the child feel special and unique.

Many adult twins will tell you that they cannot recall sitting down for one meal with a parent without their twin sibling present. Take your young twin child to her favorite restaurant alone, just the two of you. You'll be amazed at how happy this will make her — and you'll be amazed at how much she'll open up and share!

It's also important for others in your twins' lives to have one-on-one time. If there are other non-twin children in the family, coordinate times for each twin to have separate time with the non-twin sibling(s). If you can arrange for your twins to have alone-time with grandparents, aunts, cousins, etc., all the better! This will help your relatives discover what's particular and enchanting about each child and this will help your twin children feel more like individuals. And don't forget to schedule different play dates for your children with different friends. It makes sense that two

different kids might get along (or not get along) with different peers, right?

BIRTHDAY PARTIES SHOULD BE TAILORED FOR EACH TWIN

It's conceivable that a twin child might feel shortchanged by having to share his birthday party every year. Discuss having separate birthday parties with each child in private. If one child wishes to celebrate separately, honor that wish and consider representing the decision for separate birthday parties as one you alone have made.

If you are welcoming birthday gifts for your twin children, gently guide relatives and friends as to the differing gift wish lists of each child. If your children are given identical gifts, separate your children or have them sit back-to-back when opening them. This way, each child can experience the joy and surprise of discovering the new gift without having it ruined by witnessing his twin sibling's reaction upon unwrapping.

If your twins decide to share their birthday party, there are simple ways to make your twins' birthday feel more special for each child: make a personalized toast to each child; bake (or buy) two separate cakes (with each child's respective favorite flavors and decorations); and sing "Happy Birthday" twice.

Whether it's a celebration of the magical day your twins were born or a weekend full of errands and play dates, always consider that there are two children involved — two children with very distinctive needs and desires. In fact, in any situation, you may want to ask yourself, what would a parent of a singleton do...? ♥

Dara Lovitz, Esq., lives in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, and is the mother of two very different twin toddlers. She is the author of the popular children's book, *Catching Falling Cradles: A Gentle Approach to Classic Rhymes*, and is working on her next book: *an advice guide for parents of twins*.

by David Colp



Aidan and Blake had fetal surgery for TTTS

A TTTS Survivor Story

from the St. Louis
Fetal Care Institute



"I was shocked and upset. I knew since early in my first trimester that there was potential for Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) to develop because of the type of twins I was carrying. That's why I was going to routine ultrasounds – to see if TTTS would happen. Even though I knew about the possibility prior to my TTTS developing, I took my doctor's advice and tried not to think about it. They told me we had a 20-percent chance of TTTS, and at the time that seemed so slim," says Theresa.

Because Theresa and her husband David knew that TTTS was a pos-

sibility with her pregnancy, they researched their options so they would be ready if the diagnosis came. TTTS is a prenatal condition in which twins share unequal amounts of the placenta's blood supply, resulting in the two fetuses growing at different rates. Seventy percent of identical twins share a placenta, and 10-20 percent of these pregnancies are affected by TTTS.

Most commonly, the twins are in different sacs of fluid, the amniotic sacs. This type of twin pregnancy is called di-amniotic (two sacs) and monochorionic (one placenta). In di-amniotic, monochorionic twins

(di-mo twins), there are shared blood vessels which run from one twin to the other on the surface of the placenta. Most often the net flow of blood between the twins is fairly even, but when there is an imbalance of blood flow across these blood vessels, such that one twin is getting more blood supply than the other, then TTTS can occur. The fetus with more blood flow is called the recipient twin, and the fetus with less is called the donor twin.

When she was 21 weeks pregnant, Theresa was diagnosed with severe TTTS, and surgery was needed immediately. Already having their hands full with a five-year-old daughter at home, the couple embarked on a journey to save their twin boys.

Theresa and David were not aware there was a facility in St. Louis that could help them. She says that the way they found out about the St. Louis Fetal Care Institute is the main reason they want to raise awareness of it. "When I was going for routine ultrasounds, my husband and I were always told about hospitals in other states that offered the TTTS surgery. We were never told that St. Louis had a doctor that could do the procedure. We had already prepared our families and employers that we might need to travel without much – if any – notice if TTTS developed. But the day they told us I had developed TTTS and needed fetal laser surgery, I was in too much pain to travel. My doctors and the hospital's fetal care specialists referred me to the St. Louis Fetal Care Institute," Theresa reports.

Still, all Theresa could focus on was getting to a center that was more than six hours away. Then she and David met Fetal Care Institute Program Coordinator Katie Francis, who showed the utmost concern for Theresa and her twins. She recommended the Fetal Care Institute's Dr. Vlastos, explaining his background and expertise with TTTS. The couple was still not sure if staying in St. Louis

was the right choice. However, after drilling Dr. Vlastos with questions, they decided the St. Louis Fetal Care Institute was the best place for their care.

Theresa comments, “We remember Dr. Vlastos saying, ‘If you decided to have the procedure here, I will do my best to get my staff here tonight.’” At 9 p.m. that evening Dr. Vlastos and his team performed the TTTS laser surgery. “He didn’t finish the surgery until at least 2 a.m. and he was in my room later that morning checking on me. After the surgery, I knew we made the right decision,” recalls Theresa.

During Theresa’s fetal surgery, the team made a small incision in her stomach and used a laser to correct blood flow in some of the placenta’s veins and arteries. Following the surgery, she had complications with contractions, which put her on bed rest. Then at approximately 28 weeks, there was a fluid shift with the boys that landed Theresa back into the hospital for the rest of her pregnancy.

Theresa and David’s boys—Aidan and Blake—made it to full-term and were born at 37 weeks via cesarean section. The twins are doing great, and never had to stay in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Their follow-up appointments aren’t revealing any problems. There is very little size difference between the boys. In fact, on many days, the family has a hard time telling them apart.

Theresa says, “We have made many friends through the Fetal Care Institute. We found parents that have been through similar situations. ‘The girls’—as I referred to the women on the team—were irreplaceable. They were instrumental in helping my family every step of the way. Dr. Vlastos saved our babies. My boys are here today because of his compassion, knowledge and skill. The staff at Fetal Care Institute were never just our nurses, doctors and staff. They were our friends who truly cared about our family’s outcome.”

Theresa says, “They were the ones I trusted. If they said something, I knew it was true. When I called them, they always returned my calls promptly. If the team needed to call Dr. Vlastos about my condition, he always got back with them right away. It was like having my own team of

specialists by my side 24/7. That alone was comforting. When I developed complications, they took every precaution to keep me safe. My husband and I had no doubt that if more complications were to arise, the Fetal Care Institute team would do what they could to correct them. They proved that they could handle my condition even when new complications arose.”


Theresa and David said that throughout their journey, their daughter was a trooper. She handled the situation like it was any other time in her life. The couple could not shield her from most of the problems. The little girl knew that her brothers needed a lot of care, and she knew that her mom went to a lot of doctors’ appointments.

“The hardest challenge was when I was in the hospital for the extended period of time. She was five years old the day I went into the hospital to stay, and it was also her first day of kindergarten. I was amazed at how grown up she acted. She made it easy not to worry about her and concentrate on keeping her brothers safe. Every time I talked to her, she was happy. When my husband wasn’t visiting me, working, or taking on all of the housework, bills and so much more, he was taking care of our daughter. David made sure she was okay, doing well in school and having as much routine as he could give her. I owe a lot to my family and friends who babysat, visited me, and helped keep my life running smoothly while I was in the hospital. I would not have made it through without all of their support,” Theresa says.

Theresa and David learned a lot from this experience. They found out that sometimes you can’t control a situation no matter how hard you try. There was no explanation on why their boys developed TTTS and others don’t. Theresa had no control over whether it developed. She would advise expectant families facing similar situations that there is always hope, no matter what the statistics say. “I would tell them to stay positive even when it is easier to be negative. I would tell them they are never alone — there is support out there. Lastly, I would tell them about the wonderful team I met while going through this,” she comments.

Before her pregnancy, Theresa didn’t know much about TTTS or anyone who

had gone through it. Since the boys have been born, she hears about more and more people in the same situation, and is working to build awareness.

Because they were so grateful for the Fetal Care Institute’s care, Theresa and David hold a baseball-game fundraiser to benefit the Institute every year. “My family’s love for the St. Louis Cardinals just made the decision easier. We wanted to raise awareness for TTTS because we were not even aware that St. Louis had a facility that treated TTTS. If I wasn’t in so much pain the evening I was diagnosed, I probably would have never found out about the Fetal Care Institute,” Theresa says. 

Upcoming Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) Awareness Events:

Saturday, July 11, 2015 Dine Out to Fight TTTS @ Blueberry Hill

From 5 PM until 10 PM 20% of your total bill will go to **St. Louis Fetal Care Institute**. There will be a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle. You must present a flyer to you waiter or waitress. A flyer will be available soon at www.tttsawarenessgame.com or TTTS Awareness Game on Facebook. Email: TTTSawarenessgame@gmail.com for more information. Blueberry Hill is located at 6504 Delmar Blvd, University City Mo 63130, 314-727-4444

Friday, September 4, 2015 — TTTS Awareness Night at the Ball Park

Cardinals’ vs Pirates Game First 26,000 fans 16 and over entering the game will receive a 1967 Replica Word Series Ring. Tickets cost \$30.00 and you can learn more here: www.TTTSawarenessgame.com or email: tttsawarenessgame@gmail.com or you can call: 314-575-3112 T-shirts are also available for \$10.00.

Transforming TRAGEDY

Evolution of the Twin Resource Center

by Jacqueline Parker Hatch, MSW, LCSW

It was 1994 yet the memory stays as vivid as brilliant lightening in a severe summer storm. I was sitting in the waiting area of a doctor's office. Having forgotten my own reading material, I scanned the available magazines in the room. Immediately I was drawn to TWINS magazine. Since my twin died unexpectedly in 1991 when we were in our twenties, I had an overwhelming sensitivity to all things related to twins. I began to sporadically thumb through the magazine and came upon a life changing page, an article about the Twinless Twins Support Group. I froze. My mind then began to race about what to do next. I knew I could not read the article without sobbing, and the waiting room was certainly not the place for that to happen. I knew I could not in good conscience steal the magazine, yet I desperately needed this information. What if I could not find the magazine in the store? I decided to approach the receptionist to request a copy of the article, which she kindly produced. I thanked her and hurriedly stuffed the papers in my purse for later review.

My grief journey had been steep and extremely rocky, despite having skills as a social worker helping others with grief and loss for more than seven years before my world disintegrated. When my twin died I knew right away it would be helpful if I could talk to another twin who had survived the death of a twin. Widows helped other widows, parents dealing with the death of a child comforted other parents, but there just weren't a lot of twins in those days. And in those days, the internet was not a tool I had at my fingertips. Because my mother is a twin, I thought she would be able to understand my devastation and how twin loss is different from other losses. She, of course, was deep in her personal nightmare of dealing with the death of one twin child, and her own twinship was intact. I considered an advertisement in the newspaper. What would I write? What would others think? No one really seemed to get what I was dealing with so that idea was quickly dismissed. In the doctor's office, after four, long painful years I finally had what I knew I needed in my purse. It seemed cruel I had to wait more. The waiting ended the moment I was alone in the safety of my car in the parking lot. I read the article over and over. I sobbed. I felt hope.

Figuring out how to continue living when I considered myself half dead seemed insurmountable for so long. Going from a plural to singular view of life simply did not compute. There were many times my survival was in question. I had, however, one persistent futuristic thought that did stay with me. I told myself, if I survived



the death of my twin and continued in a social work career, I would one day be a better social worker and I would try to help other bereaved twins have a different experience than mine.

Once I contacted the founder of the

Twinless Twins Support Group, Dr. Raymond Brandt, a new path to healing opened up for me. This group offered a chance to communicate with other bereaved twins. At last, an awareness and validation like no other! The experience I wanted to alter for other twins was professional grief counseling. While I was lost in the vast darkness of early grief, I participated in grief counseling from more than one counselor. It was sadly not helpful. The counselors were good with standard interventions, yet there was not the slightest attentiveness to the fact the twin relationship was different from the death of a traditional sibling. This was my twin brother, half of my very being from my perspective. It's different. Not "worse", different.

At this point my social work career has spanned 30 years. Last year I launched the Twin Resource Center full time in hopes of following through with what I told myself in those early days after my twin's death. I survived and I stayed in social work! I truly believe I have been a better, more compassionate social worker due to personal experience. Next, it was time to create the transformed experience I wished for other bereaved twins seeking professional grief counseling to have.

The Twin Resource Center is an education and counseling service. I am even more passionate about providing training for other professionals since the twin population has been on the rise. The twin demographic is changing around the world. With more twins, there will be more twin loss. There will be more twins and their loved ones who may seek professional help dealing with a variety of twin related matters. I am a licensed clinical social worker who is available to provide counseling for twins or their loved ones in the state of NC. With the use of telehealth, which is constantly growing in popularity, I can provide counseling services throughout the state without clients having to leave their home. To me, the ultimate would be professionals who are twins helping twins, and there are others, but there aren't enough.

Since 2007 I have provided training to interdisciplinary professional groups about twins and about twin bereavement. Attendees, many who have been grief counselors, have consistently reported a better understanding of twins along with feeling more equipped to serve twins in ways they would not otherwise have known to consider. It is my mission to do more. When twins are seeking care of any kind, particularly bereavement care, I want them to be assured the person helping them is very informed about twins and realizes twins' needs are uniquely different from all other relationships. Our world usually responds to changing demographics and twins deserve a response too! Learn more by visiting: www.twinresourcecenter.org ♥

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JUST CLICK ON THE ABOVE ADS FOR A DIRECT LINK



Multiples of America

55th Annual Convention

Millennium Hotel

Pre-Convention Tours and Activities: **Sun-Tues, July 26-28, 2015**

Convention: **Wed-Sat, July 29-August 1, 2015**

Who should go?

- Parents of Multiples
- Club Leaders
- State Organization Leaders
- Researchers and Educators

Planned events and activities

- Workshops
- Luncheons
- Business Meetings
- Parties
- Tours
- MOM's Mall
- Installation Banquet

Why Cincinnati?

- Great restaurants
- Fun tours
- Great American Ballpark
- Cincinnati-style chili
- Walkable city

Multiples of America (aka NOMOTC) cordially invites you to attend the 55th Annual Unity Convention, Building Bridges, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Come and build bridges between Multiples of America and its members as we perform the annual business of the organization; between the member clubs and/or state organizations as we communicate our best practices, tips from growing clubs, work on retaining members, and how best to serve each member in our shareshops; between parents of multiples as we spend time reuniting with old friends and making new ones as we socialize; and between our organization's past 55 years with our future as we move forward with our new branding effort. With varied options for registration, you can choose to attend for just one day, for the Convention portion, or for the entire week including all activities. Enjoy the rich history of Cincinnati and Covington, KY, along the mighty Ohio River. Make your room reservations and your packing lists now, and we'll see you in July!

Register Online Now!

Visit Convention 2015 on www.MultiplesOfAmerica.org for our easy online registration.

On time registration runs through June 10th, but don't delay — register today!

International Twins Association

81st Annual Convention

Orlando, FL

Sept 4th - 6th, 2015

A Non-Profit Social Group for Twins, Multiples, Surviving Multiples, Family & Friends

2015 ITA Convention Agenda

Orlando, Florida

Thursday, Sept 3 - Pre-convention

- AM/PM I-Ride Trolley to Attractions, Shops & Restaurants
3:00PM Disney Magic Kingdom After 4 & Fireworks

Friday, Sept 4

- 7:00AM Golf Tournament
9:30AM Downtown Disney & Lunch
2:00PM Executive Committee Meeting
5:30PM WonderWorks Dinner/Magic Show

Saturday, Sept 5

- 8:00AM Kennedy Space Center
6:30PM Disney Theme Dinner/Games/Bingo/Dance

Sunday, Sept 6

- 7:00AM Golf Tournament
8:30AM Gospel Hour/Surviving Twins Candle Lighting
10:00AM Twins & Multiples Judging Contest
After contest Group ITA Photo
2:00PM ITA Business Meeting
6:30PM "Once Upon A Time" Formal Dinner/
Dance/Silent Auction

Monday, Sept 7 - Post-convention

- PM TBD Monday Night Dinner Club: Non-official evening meal for those who are still around

JOIN US! - Look for a detailed Agenda with more information including prices, Convention Registration & Membership Forms on the ITA website:
www.IntlTwins.org



Make plans now to visit sunny Florida for a family vacation & enjoy the ITA



"Double Trouble Golf"

The Orlando multiples, family & friends golf outing is set for Friday, Sept 4th & Sunday, Sept 6th.

To confirm your participation - contact Jeff DeWitt at 901-828-7034 OR email:

jdewitt@centromemphis.com

~ Sunday Evening Silent Auction ~

Be sure to bring item(s) of your choice for the always fun silent auction!

-2015 Hotel Information -

Rosen Plaza Hotel

9700 International Dr, Orlando, FL 32819-8114

Reservations by phone: 1-800/627-8258 or 1-407/996-9700

Group Name: International Twins Association

Reservations online: Hotel link under Convention Information on the ITA website: www.IntlTwins.org

Single or Double occupancy rates:

Contact Hotel for Room Rates

Family rate: Children 17 & under are FREE

Triple or Quad occupancy rates:

Above rates + additional \$20/guest, per room, per night.

- ♦ Limited Kings available, so call to book early!
- ♦ Onsite parking \$5.00/night
- ♦ The group rate is available: Aug 30th - Sept 10th

Book by JULY 29, 2015 to reserve your room!

Double Takes

We Celebrate our DADS!



1

Dad Eric, Harper & Emma, ID
Age 2
Pleasantville, Ohio



2

Dad Bill, Charlie & Emily, FR
Age 11-months
East Bridgewater, Massachusetts



3

Dad Dustin, Avery & Emma, FR
Age 6-months
Sand Springs, OK



4

Dad Anthony, Jordan & Bryant, FR
Age 16-months
Harrison Twp., MI



5

Dad Eldon, Zen & Zoe, FR
Age 16-months
Brooklyn, NY



6

Dad Ari, Mila & Ciela, ID
Age 6-months
Denver, CO



7

Dad Josh, Aiden & Grayson, ID
Age 2-weeks with big brother Brody age 2
Morgantown, WV



8

Dad Bill, Beckham & Mikaela, FR
Age 8-months
Monroe, CT

May/June 2015



9

Dad Angel, Jacob & Joshua, FR
Age 2
Hempstead, New York



10

Dad Nano, Nico & Vincent, FR
Age 18-months
Bakersfield, CA



11

Dad Dwayne, Morgan & Madison, ID
Age 5-months
Brooklyn, New York



12

Dad Josh, Audrey & Abby, FR
Age 11-months
Conway, Arkansas



13

Dad Jeremy, Ashlyn & Brielle, ID
Age 8-months
San Diego, CA



14

Dad Raymond, Bronson & Beatrice, FR
Age 7-months
Santa Barbara California



15

Dad Mike, Gwyneth & Delia, FR
Age 2
Collegeville, PA



16

Dad Hank, Tatum & Hudson, FR
Age 6-months
Aylmer, Ontario, Canada



17

Dad John, Laurel & Brody, FR
Age 18-months
West Palm Beach, FL



18

Dad Matthew, Reagan & Samantha, ID
Age 2
Jacksonville, FL



19

Dad Jeff, Hudson & Miles, FR
Age 5-months
The Woodlands, Texas

Double Takes • We Celebrate our DADS!



20 Dad Garret, Sara, Hazel & Patrick, FR triplets, Age 7-months, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire UK



21 Dad Christopher, Nicole & Stephania, ID Age 18-months Lake Hopatcong, NJ



24 Dad Mark, Connor & Avery, FR, Age 3 & Leah & Elyse, FR, Age 9-days Martinsburg, WV



22 Dad Michael, Parker & Kent, FR Age 4-months Sandusky, Ohio



23 Dad Alejandro, Alexander & Giada, FR Age 1 San Antonio, Texas



25 Dad Matt, Asher & Bishop, FR Age 10-months Orangevale, CA



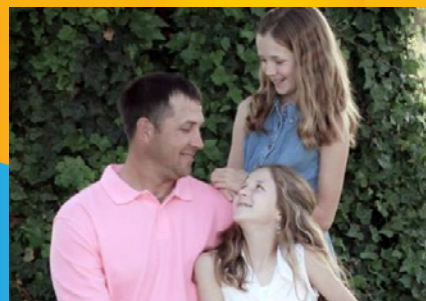
26 Dad Nathaniel, Harper & Owen, FR Age newborn Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada



27 Dad Ricardo, Ryder & Rhys, FR Age 3-months Belton, TX



28 Dad Tim, Maverick & Chance, FR Age 3-months Island Lake, WI



29 Dad Chad, Reagan & Riley, FR Age 10 Bamberg SC



30 Dad Robert, Hailey & Riley, ID Age 4 Savannah, GA

May/June 2015



31 Dad Brian, Gavin & Vance, ID
Age 4
Mascoutah, Illinois



32 Dad Anoop, Alina & Sara, FR
Age 17-months
Houston, Texas



33 Dad Patrick, Madison & Laila, FR
Age 2
Burlington, NC



34 Dad Cory, Finley & Logan, FR
Age 4-months
Indianapolis, IN



35 Dad Andrew, Ella & Bria, FR
Age 20-Months
Grafton, WV



36 Dad Joseph, Joei & Audrina, FR
Age 3-months
Staten Island, NY



37 Dad Chris, Ella & Patrick, FR
Age 10-months
Coralville, Iowa



40 Dad James, Jesse & Ella, FR
Age 6
Roseville, CA



38 Dad Jesse, Karter & Khloe, FR
Age 3-months
Kingsville Texas



39 Dad Sam, Evie & Kylee, ID
Age 8-months
San Antonio, TX

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