

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984!

TWINS™

www.TwinsMag.com
March/April 2011

Resolving
Conflict With
Your Pre-School
Twins

Postpartum
Depression
Worse with
twins?

Helping your
singleton child
prepare for the
arrival of twins

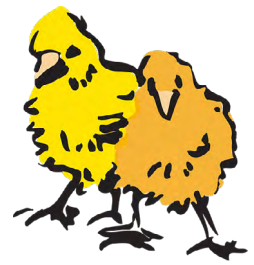
Breastfeeding
vs Formula
Is breast always best?

Bed-Wetting
Approaching the
problem with a
positive attitude



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On the Cover



Eli and Ezra are fraternal twins from Westford, MA. They are mom Vanessa's miracle rainbow babies after their older brother Aidan passed away in 2011.

Eli and Ezra are amazing big brothers to their new baby sister, Evangeline. They love singing and dancing with Mommy, and fishing with Daddy. Eli has a love of trains, while Ezra enjoys drawing.

They are both sweet as honey, but as wild and adventurous as bear cubs. Twin brothers and best friends!

Cover Photography by Kelly Fiers
kellyannphotographs.com

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Your weirdest questions from strangers



Raindrops keep falling on my head...

Spring is in the air, and we're finally getting some long awaited warmer weather. Plants are beginning to bloom and the world is slowly but surely filling with color again. As I was sitting here at my desk this morning, I could see the blossoms of the cherry trees through the window, finally breaking up the winter monotony of dull browns. The sky was a bright blue behind the pink blossoms, and the world felt all fresh and new. The possibilities, surely, were endless.

And then it rained.

In a matter of moments, the clear blue sky of spring had been replaced by an expanse of miserable grey clouds. Sometimes life can be a bit like the weather. One minute everything is fine, and then the heavens will open and everything becomes a sad, sodden mess without any warning at all. This issue of TWINS™ Magazine is dedicated to mental health and dealing with life's rainier moments. We have an in depth look at Postpartum Depression, and how it can be so much worse when you have two new babies demanding every ounce of your attention.

Moms aren't the only ones whose mental health can suffer. Twins themselves often find themselves overwhelmed with feelings of jealousy, or suffer from low self-esteem because they are constantly compared to their co-twin. With people always referring to them as "the twins", they often feel like without their sibling they are not a whole person in a way that

singleton children never have to deal with. Christina Baglivi Tinglof addresses this common problem in 'A Little Privacy, Please', and highlights the importance of allowing twins to develop their own individual personalities.

Bed-wetting is another sore subject than can cause a lot of rivalry between twins, especially when only one twin is struggling to stay dry. We have a thoughtful piece from Christine F. Ridout that includes tips on how to deal with the issue with sensitivity so that the twin who is having trouble does not feel left behind.

This issue of TWINS™ also sees the introduction of a new column: *Over To You*. We asked our Facebook fans to share the weirdest questions they've ever been asked while out in public with their twins, and you can see the results on page 9. We'll be asking readers a different question for each issue, so be sure to like our Facebook page so you can get involved and perhaps see your comments published in the next edition.

In the meantime, let's forget our winter blues, pull on our rain boots, jump in some puddles and have some fun while we wait for summer!



Sincerely,

Laura Cunningham

Laura Cunningham,
Editor-in-Chief

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Panoptic Media Marketing Inc.
dba: TWINS™ Magazine
publisher@twinsmagazine.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Laura Cunningham
twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
Jeff Varnes
jeff.varnes@panoptic-media.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Katie Slocombe
katie.slocombe@panoptic-media.com

ART DIRECTOR
artdirector@twinsmagazine.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE
customerservice@twinsmagazine.com

SALES EXECUTIVES
Karen Johnson
karen.johnson@americas-media.com
Charmain Edwards
charmain.edwards@americas-media.com

CONTACT INFORMATION
Panoptic Media Marketing Inc.
dba: TWINS™ Magazine

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS
Meredith Bland; Laura Cunningham; Jennifer S. Dahlen; Jennifer Jordan; Rebecca Moskwinski; Christine F. Ridout; Julie Blair Riekse; Lisa Stukel; Lynn Ticknor; Christina Baglivi Tinglof; Katherine Wexler

MAIN CONTACT PHONE NUMBER

Tel: 1-352-597-6200
www.twinsmagazine.com

George W. Bush's twin daughters are writing a joint memoir. *Sisters First: Stories From Our Wild and Wonderful Life* is set to be released on 24 October 2017, and will be published by Grand Central Publishing.

Jenna Bush Hager and Barbara Pierce Bush (35) were in college while their father was in the White House, and their escapades made headlines. They hope this book will be "an entertaining read that will also give readers a more nuanced look behind the headlines."



A newly single mom has made headlines after selling her business, car and belongings to backpack around the world with her nine-year-old twins.

After being recently diagnosed with MS, Lara Flanagan from New South Wales, decided that life too short and booked the round-the-world tickets on a whim. The trio are now living off no more than \$100AUD (\$76USD) a day, and have traveled around the US, Costa Rica and Italy for the past nine months.

Twins Archie and Larissa have been enrolled in a distance learning program, but will soon be returning to school when they head back to Australia; but not before visiting Thailand and Cambodia first!



Four year old twins, Roman and Samuel Sharma (UK), have been credited with saving their mother's life after she collapsed and lost consciousness.

The twins unlocked mom Claudia's iPhone by pressing her finger to the screen and then asked Siri for help. Roman and Samuel were then redirected to the emergency services, who were able to dispatch an ambulance in time to save her life.

Mrs Claudia Sharma said: "We are immensely proud of Roman and Samuel; they did a fantastic job of looking after me and their little brother. We play Doctors, Police and Firemen at home all the time and I taught them their home address and how to call 999 after seeing a similar story last year. Obviously I never thought they would have to use it, but they remembered everything I had told them and stayed very calm."



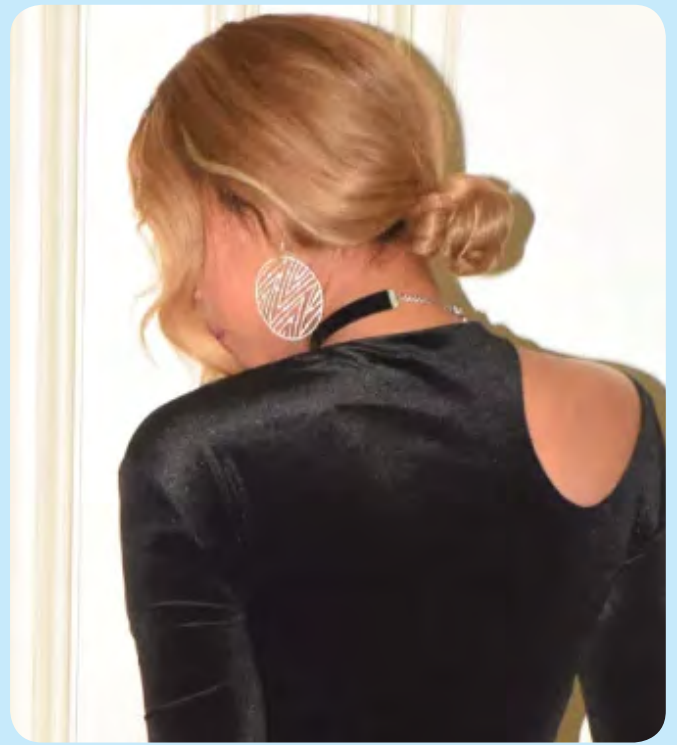
Esther and Stella Mwale are settling in well with their new mom Madonna after she was given permission to adopt the four-year-old twins by the Malawian high court. The singer recently spoke about her love for Malawi, saying: "I've been working in Malawi for over a decade. I have a huge commitment and love for the country and I will never desert them."

Mum of identical twins, Sarah Maund, has shared photographs taken during lazer ablation surgery to treat TTTS (twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome). The incredible pictures show the boys apparently waving hello from inside the womb at just 22 weeks. The twins, Sebastian and Henry, are now happy and healthy two-year-olds who enjoy getting into mischief and playing cars with their big brother Alfie, aged three.



A video of a pair of New York twins have gone viral after their parents, Jonathan and Susana Balkin, shared footage from a home monitoring system on Facebook. It shows the twins - Andrew and Ryan, aged two - being settled in for the night by their parents, but the cheeky pair do anything but sleep. Instead they climb out of their cribs to play, dance and giggle - and at one point they even build a fort.

Jonathan and Susana are used to their sons' night time antics; they have had to empty the bookshelves and bolt the furniture to the walls. "They're just happy and joyful and so busy," Jonathan said. "They have a bond that other people who aren't twins can't appreciate."



International superstar Beyoncé has revealed that she is expecting twins. She commented on her Instagram: "We would like to share our love and happiness. We have been blessed two times over. We are incredibly grateful that our family will be growing by two, and we thank you for your well wishes."

The singer has a reputation for dropping hints on social media before making big announcements; she had posted several pictures including lemons before dropping her hit album *Lemonade* last April. Fans have taken a closer look at a recent photo she has posted and noticed that her earrings are the same ones she had on in her 2008 music video for 'If I Were a Boy', leading to speculation that the photo is a hint that she is expecting boys.

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The twin-jealousy dragon raises its enormous head

by Jennifer Jordan

PARENTS ASK:

I have noticed that one of my twins gets really jealous when I give attention to the other. I try to divide my time up as equally between the two as possible, but even so, one of the twins always seems to want my attention every time I give it to the other. What do you recommend I do?

JENNIFER'S TAKE:

Ah, twins. Sometimes one is a rock, the other is a hard place, and you're stuck in the middle. This is particularly true when it comes to vying for attention from a parent: As each twin demands your undivided attention, you may find yourself wishing that you, in fact, were also a twin. When one twin is more aggressive about it than the other, things can really become difficult and you may feel as if you're forced to choose between your children.

I don't know why we twins do this. Like it's not enough trouble to make our parents change double the number of diapers! But, there's just something about being a twin that makes parental attention the apex of the sibling rivalry game. For twins, sibling rivalry is placed atop the "to do" list; if we have no toys to fight over, no names to call each other, and no hair to pull, we always have parental attention to use as our major source of contention.

Looking back, I don't feel as though on a whole my sister or I was more demanding than the other when it came to our parents' attention. But there were definitely instances when one of us became overly aggressive about it.

I remember being sick as a young child and having my mother's attention, only to have my twin come along and do something, anything—stopping just short of performing a song and dance number—to draw attention to herself. Conversely, when my mother was focusing her attention on our younger sister, my twin didn't behave in this same manner. There was just something about my mom giving attention to me that made my sister jealous.

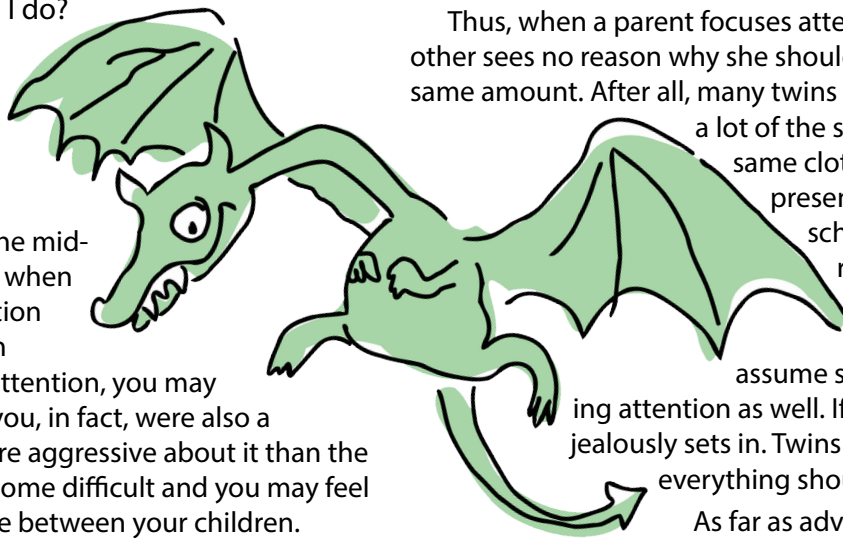
I believe it comes down to this: Twins know they are individuals. They know they each have their own feelings and their own thoughts. But sometimes this is forgotten by society. Twins become so accustomed to being coupled, being thought of as a pair, that deep down inside they are forced to think of themselves, if even the tiniest bit, as some sort of duo.

Thus, when a parent focuses attention on one, the other sees no reason why she shouldn't be served up the same amount. After all, many twins are so used to getting a lot of the same things—the same clothes, same birthday presents, same grades in school—that if one twin receives attention, the other is virtually programmed to assume she should be receiving attention as well. If it doesn't happen, jealousy sets in. Twins are pre-wired to think everything should be equal.

As far as advice goes, for starters know that this will pass. It's a phase. The older twins become, the less they expect to receive all the same things, including the same amount of parental attention. Every year that passes means twins are becoming more independent of each other. By the time I was in middle school, I didn't really mind if my sister got more parental attention than me (especially if she was being yelled at). Every year, both my twin sister and I were a little less concerned with things being equal.

Second, giving one twin more attention when she needs it is okay. That's what parents do with all their children, twins or otherwise. If the other twin becomes jealous and vies for attention, simply explain that their sister or brother needs more attention right now and why. If the jealous twin seems unyielding—unwilling to understand—then compromise: Tell your child you need to pay attention to the other twin right now but later in the day you will spend some alone-time with him or her.

When it comes down to it, remember that vying for your parental attention is nothing too serious. It's just part of sibling rivalry. ♡



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Down With a Sickness

by Meredith Bland

7am Oh god. Oh no. Am I? I am. I'm sick. I'm sick on a Tuesday with 3-year-old twins. Oh no, WHY? Dear lord, why hast thou set before me this day of pain and grief? Are my days not hard enough when I'm healthy?! Giving me an illness when I have to parent is like punching an airline pilot in the face before take-off – it just puts everyone in danger.

7:10 Still in bed. I cannot possibly take care of the kids today. Maybe my husband will stay home with them? Or he could drop them off at a petting zoo or toy store? Anything that will occupy them for the next 6-8 hours.

7:30 My uncaring, unfeeling husband has left for work. Now it's just the four of us: me, the twins, and an illness I will call Maleficent. Maleficent wants me silent and horizontal. And she wants it bad.

7:35 The kids need breakfast. From the floor, I point at the refrigerator and say, "Waffle... toast... apple...mmpf..." They grab themselves whatever and I crawl over to the television and turn on Nick Jr. for some sweet, sweet relief.

8:00-9:00 Agony. I am in agony IN hell. Another episode of Yo Gabba Gabba? Sure. Why not. It's not like I have any shame left today, as I lay here in my pajamas, drooling on the couch at 9:00 in the morning.

9:00-10:00 The kids... where are the kids? Oh wait, I hear them running up the stairs to get themselves snacks (probably big handfuls of jelly beans and methamphetamines). They're very supportive, though. They keep pressing their faces up to mine and singing "Keep trying, keep trying, don't give up, never give up".

10:30 Ok. I am not going to look at the clock for a while. Then when I look at it again, it will be time to make them lunch. Which means it will almost be time for them to nap. Ok. I can do this.

10:45 DANGIT!

11:30 Lunchtime. Look, Mommy is going to crawl up the stairs. Yeah, like a dog. Isn't that hilarious? Come on group, let's go teamwork our way into making a sandwich.

12:00 One hour till nap time. You want me to be the princess and you are the evil Queen? Perfect. Let's play Snow White. "Oh no, I am going to eat this poison apple and fall asleep... oh... no... zzzzzzzzzzz." Now go figure out how to wake me up. But don't touch me or talk to me. That is part of the game.

1:00 NAP TIME! HALLEJULAH! What's that, children? What do you mean, you don't WANT to take a nap? Guess what, buddies? I don't WANT to be sick, but I guess today is the day all of our dreams die. Now get in there so I can pat you on the head and screech out a lullaby.

1:10 Mommy out.

2:05 Aaaaaand, we're up. I send my husband an e-mail letting him know I have not "rallied" but am still feeling super bad. He replies, with a cheery, "only a few more hours!" Lucky for him, I am too weak right now to arrange for his death.

3:30-5:30 This is bad, folks. Really bad. I should not have taken Nyquil at nap time, because now I am sick AND loopy. It's like when you're driving down the freeway and all of a sudden you realize you've missed your exit, but you don't remember seeing it go by? Yeah. Like that, only one minute you are wiping a child's butt, and the next minute the butt and the child are gone and you are sitting on a cold bathroom floor with your head against the sink. "What the – ? Aw heck. Now I have to double back and find that butt."

5:30 Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Wait. Am I saying this out loud? No. "Kids stop fighting." There. Better.

5:45 Oh man. I see headlights. In our driveway. Hail, the conquering hero! He has returned home! Here are your children. Enjoy them. I am going to turn on the bathroom fan to drown out any cries for help, getting into bed, and gracefully passing out. If I'm not better tomorrow, I will just take the kids to the library, sit on a bean bag, and cry hot, salty tears. For now, I bid you adieu. ♡

What's the weirdest question you've been asked while out in public with your twins?

We asked our facebook fans about the weirdest questions asked by strangers while out with their twins. Here are some of the most bizarre answers.



Submissions have been edited for length and clarity.

"They look so different. Do they have different dads?"

Sandy Lord-Hunt

I had a stranger in line at the grocery store ask if they were conceived in an "orgasmic moment" because twins would (supposedly) be happier as adults.

Linda Revenaugh

My first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage, so when I told my colleague I was having twins she replied: "Oh good. If anything goes wrong at least you'll still have another."

Tanja Van Steen

I'm often asked, "So they're not really twins?" as my fraternal girls have different birthdays, despite being born only 14 minutes apart.

Donna Singleton

"Are they part of the same litter?"

Leanna Chapin

"The boy looks bigger than the girl. Did he stay in the womb a month longer?"

Erika Manarin

"I guess you found out the hard way that older women are more likely to have twins?"

Tiffini Eunice

"Did you do it twice in one night to get twins?"

Karen Luke

"Twins? So did you have to be pregnant for 18 months?"

Mallory-Jason Creech

Our five year old son, Kevin, was having trouble adjusting to his newborn identical twin sisters. He complained about being asked so many questions that he didn't know how to answer. We told him as long as he was polite any answer was fine. The next day, we went to the grocery store with his sisters dressed in pink. Immediately we were surrounded by people wanting to see the infants. One person looked at him and asked if they were identical twins. He looked up innocently and said, "No, we are identical triplets. I just ate my green beans!"

Linda Gecowets White

From a nurse at the pediatrician: "Are they yours? I mean, did you carry them? Like they're biologically yours? They came out of you?"

Kate Fuchs

"What do you feed them?" I said I threw meat in the baby pit twice a week - they soon left me alone!"

Abigail Flynn

When my twins were infants, one had a test result that needed to be rechecked. She happened to be napping and it was time to go. My sweet Aunt said, "Just take the other one." I had to explain that wouldn't work, as they were two different people. To which she replied, "The nurse will never know since they're identical."

Emma Smith Warren

"Do they synchronize their poops?"

Robyn Rabinowe

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Ever wanted to see your name in print?

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We're accepting editorial submissions for the following magazine sections:

- Tales from twins
- LOL: Laugh Out Loud
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- Features

Simply send your articles and ideas to twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com for the chance to have your writing featured in our next issue!

What about me?



Ways to Help Your Singleton Child Prepare for the Twins' Arrival

Having to compete with twins for parents', relatives' and friends' time and attention is very hard on singleton children. They have a difficult time understanding how life will change, even with the best preparation.

Sibling rivalry, a nearly-universal phenomenon, reaches new heights with arrives of twin babies to the mix. Resentments often erupt in temper tantrums and other behavior problems and sometimes they simmer beneath the surface but slowly turn into bouts of pouting or teasing.

It's common for singleton children between ages two and nine to suddenly exhibit signs of increased dependency or regression, as they revert to younger behaviors. Sometimes older singleton siblings disguise their feelings and become excessive pleasers, trying to win a parent's approval and attention in the face of twin baby-distractions.

You can help your singletons understand and deal with the perceived threat of the arrival of twins by reminding them often of their advantages: they are older, bigger, more mature, and more independent while twin babies are totally dependent, needing to be fed, bathed and diapered constantly.

Minimize the sense of abandonment by reminding singletons they are a continuing and essential part of your family unit. Enlist their help in caring for the twins but avoid excessive demands. Practical necessity prompts many moms to enlist help. Be sure to provide positive feedback for helping; describe it as being a responsible member of the family and 'grown-up'.

Devoting additional one-on-one time to your singletons reinforces the message that they are important as much a part of the family and as visible as ever before. The most pressing problem for all parents of twins and singletons is there are never enough hours in a day to get everything done but staying organized and keeping the lines of communication open helps a great deal. ♥

10 Tips to Prepare your Singleton for Multiples

- 1** Take your singleton with you when you shop for the twins and let the older child pick out things for the babies.
- 2** Show your singleton his/her baby pictures and talk about when he/she was born and what life was like the first few weeks you brought them home.
- 3** Use dolls to act out 'coming home from the hospital' and how to touch and play with the twin babies.
- 4** If possible, adjust daily schedules and routines before the twins come home so the older sibling's disruption is minimal.
- 5** When you pack your bag for the hospital, pack one for your singleton child, too. Include art supplies, snacks, a new toy, disposable camera and a book on bringing home multiples.
- 6** When you come home, greet your older child and spend a little private, one-on-one time together.
- 7** Praise positive behavior and encourage your singleton to share their thoughts and feelings with you.
- 8** When people fuss over the twins (get ready because they will), try and defuse the situation by saying something like, "This is Josh and he is a wonderful big brother and such a help."
- 9** Spend time alone with your singleton to communicate that she is important and just as much part of your family as ever.
- 10** Verbalize as you interact with your singleton: "I love our talks between just you and me," or "These times are so special for me". When you tuck your child in at night, review the day and tell them how much you love them.

Breastfeeding vs Formula

*is breast always
best?*

by Laura Cunningham

Breastfeeding is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, and health professionals, but it isn't the only way to make sure your babies get a decent meal. Often breastfeeding isn't the best choice for both mom and the new arrivals, and new mothers should not feel pressured by the stigma attached to formula.

According to data collected during the *Breastfeeding among U.S. Children Born 2002-2013 CDC National Immunization Survey*, only 30-40% of infants aged three months and below were exclusively breastfed. This means that between 2002 and 2013 approximately 60-70% of infants younger than three months consumed formula, whether as a sole source of nutrition or combined with breastfeeding.

The Science of Mom: A Research Based Guide

to Your Baby's First Year (2015) by Alice Green Callahan, discusses a study found that while breastfed babies may experience fewer bouts of diarrhea, there was no difference in BMI, obesity, blood pressure, asthma, behavior difficulties or rates of dental cavities between breastfed and formula fed babies when seen again at ages 6.5 and 11 (p. 80). Another study found that while breastfed babies may experience a reduced incidence of asthma in the early years, they may actually have an increased risk of asthma later in life.

This guide offers impartial information about both options to help you make the decision that is right for you and your babies. Feeding time is an important opportunity for a mother and her babies to connect with one another, and should not be influenced by the emotional and personal experiences of those around you.

BREASTFEEDING

Pros

- Breastmilk is specifically designed for your baby and provides them with a level of protection against some infections and diseases, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), childhood leukemia, type 2 diabetes, and more
- Breastfeeding can help build a strong emotional bond between a mother and her babies
- Breastfeeding can help lower the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, obesity, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease in moms
- Breastfeeding burns extra calories, so it can help moms lose their pregnancy weight faster
- Seeing a baby thrive on breastmilk alone can be empowering for a new mother
- Breastfeeding can work as a method of birth control: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org>

Cons

- Purely breastfed babies don't always gain the correct amount of weight, so supplementing breastmilk with formula is often necessary
- Some mothers struggle to produce enough milk, and this strains the ability to bond with their babies
- Relying solely on breastfeeding can make some mothers feel trapped and pressured, leading to a feeling of dread when it is time to feed their babies
- Some mothers find breastfeeding mentally and physically draining — you can't be the best mom to your babies if you're completely stressed out all the time
- Breastfeeding can be painful until both mom and babies are used to it and feeding correctly

FORMULA FEEDING

Pros

- Some babies take to a bottle better, and it's better that a baby eats and gets enough nutrition than struggles and goes hungry
- Formula feeding allows fathers to feed the babies and form the same connection — and share the same responsibility
- Bottle feeding can be more comfortable for some babies, especially those suffering from torticollis
- Formula feeding is better for both mom and babies if the mother has a history of depression, or is receiving chemotherapy
- You are in complete control and can measure exactly how much your babies are drinking
- Going back to work will be easier without the stress of pumping several times a day
- You can eat whatever you want — no more restrictions on coffee, wine and spicy foods!

Cons

- Other people can (and will) make you feel bad about not breastfeeding — be prepared for a lot of questions and comments to come your way
- Formula feeding requires more concentration and preparation; if extra formula is added this can lead to constipation and dehydration for the babies, not to mention the amount of sterilizing and bottle warming required
- Babies with a cows' milk allergy often have trouble with formula, even those labeled as hypoallergenic
- Formula is expensive, and the costs will rise as your babies grow and start drinking more (though many companies will send you coupons to help with the cost — check online for discounts and offers)

Around the web: formula-feeding

The “breast is best” campaign is completely wrong and puts far too much pressure on new mothers, people don’t understand it just isn’t possible for some people.
Nikki C(167) — Netmums.com

I will be formula feeding. I don’t have any desire to breastfeed and never have. It’s just not a big thing to me.
amberj90 — justmommies.com

I’m feeling quite down at the moment though and I’m starting to become anxious about breast feeding in public and I’m considering switching to formula feeding.
katie g(241) — netmums.com

I couldn’t breastfeed my children and had to use formula and they way the other mothers on the ward looked at me was disgusting!
Elaine S(163) — netmums.com

Not planning on exclusively bottle feeding, but we’ll do some bottles as I have to work full time. Daddy will be bottle-feeding at home while I’m at work.
ThaiSpice — justmommies.com

I tried everything to breastfeed my first four children, and I ended up going to formula each time. I beat myself up over with every one of them, and I spiraled into depression over it.

They have all done beautifully on formula, and I’m tempted to just start out that way this time around.
hope4five — justmommies.com

My son also wouldn’t latch in the hospital and they pushed formula on me... Being a first time mom I just said yes. I regret it.
novastar — justmommies.com

I went straight to formula. My son is very healthy and always has been. Anyone can dress up a study to make bottle feeders feel guilty but I think if Mum’s happy, then baby will be too.
Lynn T(75) — netmums.com

Top tips for formula-feeding twin infants

1. Always wash your hands before preparing formula, and thoroughly wash all feeding equipment.
2. Carefully check expiration dates of formula.
3. Refrigerate prepared bottles until you use them, and don’t use leftover formula
4. Replace nipples that become hard or stiff.
5. Hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle for a steady flow of milk.
6. Don’t allow babies to sleep with bottles and never prop a bottle.
7. Burp after 2 ounces or when your baby becomes disinterested in continuing to feed, and then offer the bottle again.
8. You may need to stop feeding one baby to burp the other. Be prepared for a screaming baby, although a pacifier may work in a pinch. Some parents briefly prop one twin’s bottle while burping the other.
9. Use simple charts to track eating patterns for your doctor or for planning purposes, but don’t worry if your babies occasionally share a bottle.
10. Formula also comes especially made for premature infants. Your pediatrician will recommend such a formula, if necessary, as well as advise you on how long to provide the special formula for your babies.

We asked the TWINS Magazine community on Facebook if they breastfed or formula-fed their twins and these are the results:



- Breastfeeding (31.69%)
- Formula-feeding (29.36%)
- A combination (38.95%)

Top tips for Breastfeeding twinfants

1. Try not to have formula in the house or on-hand in the hospital. Friendly relatives may try to lend a helping hand while you're resting. Don't give them the temptation.
2. Read up on the benefits of breastfeeding before your babies are born. Breastfeeding can be tricky, so it's handy to be able to remember why you're doing this when you're close to giving up.
3. If you are struggling to get your babies to latch-on properly, don't panic. Ask for help. Breastfeeding is a learned skill and doesn't always come naturally. Don't suffer in silence. Talk to other nursing mothers, your hospital, support groups, local lactation consultants, online advisors. All these people are available to help, you just need to ask.
4. Try to stay at home with your twinfants as long as possible before returning to work.
5. Plan to breastfeed for at least a year, but make sure you end up doing whatever makes you and your babies happy and healthy.
6. Regularly trim your twinfants' fingernails. Infant nails grow extremely fast and nursing a baby whose long nails are digging into your areola can be very off-putting.
7. Nurse whenever your babies demand, even if it's the middle of the night. Ignore people who brag about their "easy" babies who have adapted to a schedule: more often than not these are babies who are put on cow's milk right away.
8. Create a network of like-minded moms who can support you and give you advice when you need it.

Around the web: breastfeeding

I breastfed my 1st 9 years ago and got really depressed, I can honestly say I didnt enjoy it I wouldnt go out, I would shut myself away and he had got really bad asthma.

Tracey B(335) — Netmums.com

I breastfed for 2 weeks with my first, got mastitis and was told by my doctor to quit, so I switched to formula which she didn't take to well at all.

happy-ness — justmommies.com

I hope I can be successful at breastfeeding, but I'm not the kind of person who is going to put myself down because it doesn't work out. A fed baby is what matters.

Leila7780 — justmommies.com

Starting out I had cracked nipples, a blood blister on my nipple, mastitis, attachment issues. I have small nipples and thought it just wasn't meant to be. I did actually put her on formula for about 2 weeks and found it was actually a LOT harder.

oleander — bubhub.com.au

I didnt have any problems at all, but I did not realise how often babies fed! Clea was on my boob for 3 hours at a time with only about 10 min break in between.

dragonflyblu — bubhub.com.au

I thought breastfeeding would come to me naturally and that it wouldnt hurt whatsoever. The reality was far different, I had

bleeding shredded nipples after my blisters on them popped.

Kizmet — bubhub.com.au

I'm feeling quite down at the moment though and I'm starting to become anxious about breast feeding in public and I'm considering switching to formula feeding.

Rebecca F(689) — netmums.com

I breast fed my first son for 9 months, then found out my supply was not keeping up and he wasn't gaining enough so had to supplement with formula. He bulked up really fast after supplementing.

Eva L. — justmommies.com

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEE: *A Modern Fairytale*

by Julie Blair Riekse

Once upon a time, in a land called Flower Mound, Princess Elizabeth decided diapers were no longer to her liking. Her mother, a wise and astute woman, agreed the time was nigh to introduce her child to the merits of the royal throne.

The queen journeyed to the magical land of Tarjhay, where she traded her gold card for the prettiest potties even the pickiest princess would find appealing: A blue potty emboldened with a teddy, a green potty bearing a fish, a white potty with grand arms, and a pink potty the color of posies.

"Oh!" exclaimed Princess Elizabeth upon seeing her potties. "Me try them!" And so she did.

Princess Elizabeth sprinkled. Princess Elizabeth tinkled. She dripped. She dropped. She pondered. She puddled. Her highness was very, very proud of her work and called the entire kingdom to the Throne Room to see the merits of her afternoon. The queen and king clapped! Twin brother Prince William spun in celebratory circles! Even the Royal Godfather, who had no children of his own and knew nothing yet of potty appreciation, could see with his own eyes how wondrous it all was!

The bare-bottomed princess beamed with delight. But after several days of potty parties, Princess Elizabeth grew weary of the process.

"Bebe want play, no potty," she told the queen mother, with a look of dismay.

The queen, wanting to seize upon the princess's initial excitement, quickly offered more incentives. She built a library in the Throne Room, complete with developmentally-appropriate works about potty time. She offered the princess a royal stepping-stool so her precious hands could easily reach the sink, a bowl for washing made festive by

animal-shaped soaps scented with roses.

The allure of the tap lasted but a few days. Princess Elizabeth found standing on the stool to be tiresome. Her little calves grew weary. Her delicate fingers were wrinkled with so much washing.

Prince William wanted to play Hide-in-the-Royal-Draperies, a game much more interesting. Princess Elizabeth called for her Pull-Ups and declared potty time "All done."

The wise queen knew from past experience that Princess Elizabeth had a will like that of the feistiest dragons in the kingdom. If the queen pushed Princess Elizabeth on the issue, she would not budge.

So the wise queen bided her time. Several weeks passed. The queen and her entourage were shopping at Babies-R-Us when Princess Elizabeth called for a trip to the local potty. This, thought the queen, is a very good sign. So she parked her purchases and wheeled the Royal Buggy into the bathroom.

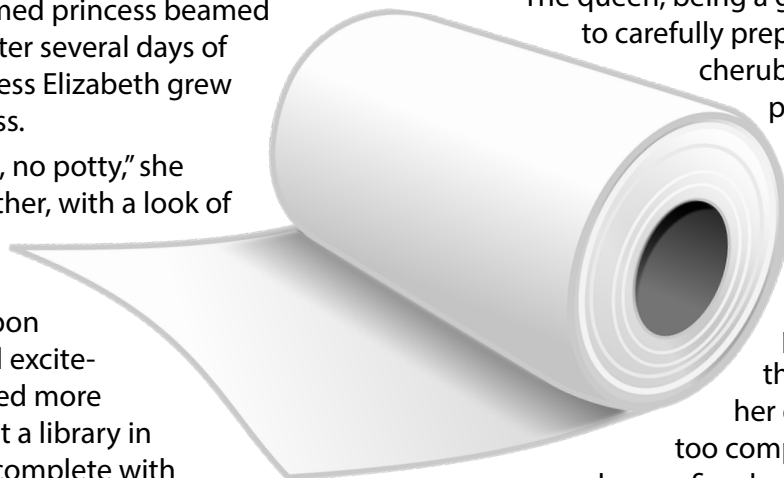
"Oh!" said the princess, spying the kid-friendly facilities.

"Bebe see little potty! Bebe try!"

The queen, being a germaphobe, made haste to carefully prepare a quilted space for her cherub on the petite potty. Once the place was properly prettied, her highness requested to be partially disrobed for the main event.

Not wanting to lose momentum, the queen complied with the princess's wish, though she suddenly realized her daughter's royal robes were too complicated to remove quickly in such a confined space. There were buttons to undo, zippers to unzip, slippers to remove.

Princess Elizabeth used her creative energy while all this took place, busying herself by unrolling yard after yard after yard of rolled paper. Then, because



the queen took so long, the princess carefully began shredding the paper.

Meanwhile, Prince William watched from his place in the Royal Buggy. He provided helpful instructions in a very loud voice so both his sister and mother would be sure to hear. "Sit down, Bebe!" he repeated again and again. "Like Meeum!" When no action was taken, Prince William cleaned out the trays in his Royal Buggy. He pitched his Royal Sippy Cup onto the floor. He dispensed his Royal Snacks. Being a very kind and thoughtful brother, he also emptied his sister's tray.

The queen felt an unseemly prickle of sweat at her hairline. The Great Undressing continued. Princess Elizabeth shuffled beyond the billowing mountain of toilet paper and began conducting science experiments while waiting for her mother to complete the undressing.

She peeked beneath the lid of the machine to see exactly where water would originate when the machine was flushed. Then she caressed the underside of the porcelain lid to see if it was cool or warm or wet. She poked out her little pink tongue and was about to see if it tasted like vanilla ice cream when the queen finally lifted her onto the potty.

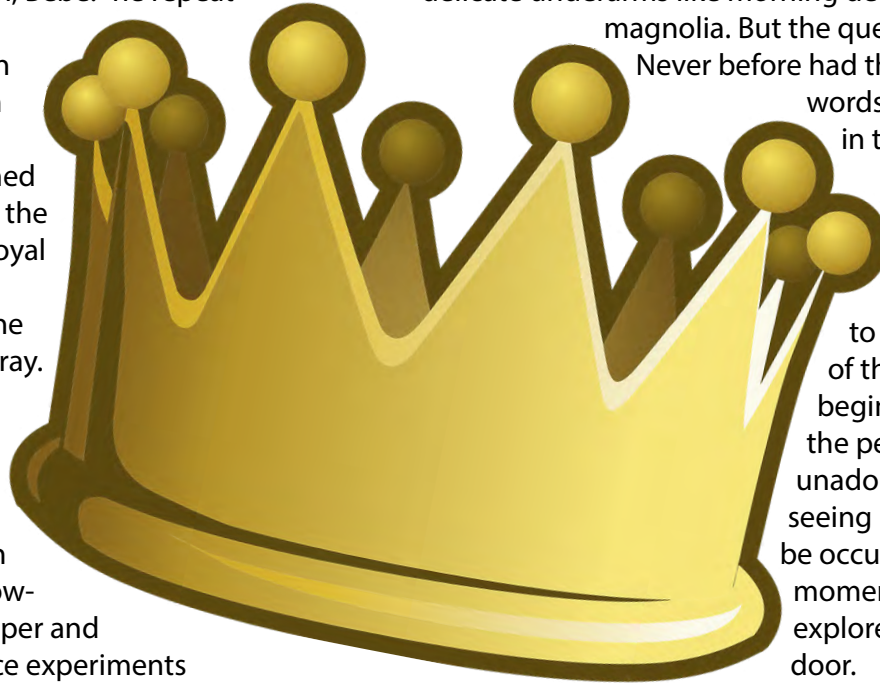
A calm washed over the threesome. It grew quiet. Too quiet. Princess Elizabeth swished her feet back and forth on her perch. Prince William sat at attention, mouth agape, waiting.

"Hmm," thought the queen, "perhaps we need a little encouragement."

The queen had lived only a short time in the Land of Flower Mound, Texas, but she had learned many in the community responded to loud chanting and arm waving.

"Prince William, we must cheer!" she exclaimed. Th us, she stood tall in the stall, raised her arms and began.

"Go, Bebe, go! Go, Bebe, go! Go, Bebe, go!" Prince William chimed in. Together their voices rose and fell in a cadence surely heard throughout the land.



Suddenly, Princess Elizabeth went! She was very, very proud.

"Meeum's turn!" the Prince wailed, unstrapping himself from the Royal Buggy in a move so violent the rig began to tip. Perspiration dripped from the queen's delicate underarms like morning dew falling from a magnolia. But the queen was no fool: Never before had the prince uttered words showing interest in the potty.

She knew she must take the opportunity to introduce him to the pleasures of the throne. She began again preparing the petite palette. The unadorned princess, seeing her mother would be occupied for several moments, tottered off to explore the facilities next door.

When everything was finally in place, including the prince, Sister, Brother and Mother all cheered with magnificent gusto.

"Go, William, go! Go, William, go! Go, William, go!"
Silence.

They tried again, even louder than before.

"Go, William, go! Go, William, go! Go, William, go!"
The prince squinted his eyes and grimaced.

"Meeum want snack," he said. "Meeum hungry."

The queen was relieved to have closure. And frankly, she was a little hungry herself.

As luck would have it, she too had been inspired by all the cheering. She gathered her children and their royal robes, washed their tiny hands and parked them in the Royal Buggy.

For a third time, she prepared the potty and took to the throne. The prince and princess stared with big, round eyes at their mother.

They began chanting. Faster and faster their words came tumbling out. Their voices crescendoed, their words filling the chamber for all to hear:

"Go, Momma, go! Go, Momma, go! Go, Momma, go!"

And go she did. ♡

Resolving Conflict

with your
TWINS



by Katherine Wexler

Arguing and conflict are a normal part of family life. If your twins said, “Yes, Mommy,” and raced to comply with every parental request, you’d probably reach for the thermometer! And with two in the playroom, hassles between your children are inevitable. Sometimes it’s hard to choose the best way to settle a struggle: Should you say, “I’m the parent, so just do it my way,” or should you explain yourself, and maybe get hooked into an unmanageable debate about why and whether your decision is the right one?

Generally, discussion helps your children develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. And they’re ready now to move in that direction. When they were toddlers, distracting them from conflict often worked. For instance, if one of them wanted a toy that the other was using, presenting another attractive choice avoided a struggle.

At this age, however, distraction is not a good conflict resolution strategy. As preschoolers, they

need to learn how to compromise, take turns, make choices, and resolve conflict more independently. Now they want to know the “why” of everything, and that includes rules and limits. Preschoolers need to explore cause and effect, what is “fair,” and how decisions are made. So when you take the “I’m the boss” position, you’re passing up a learning opportunity for your little ones. Whenever possible, explain why we have to take turns, or save sweets until after a meal, or keep the paint on the paper instead of the wall. Even better, ask them to explain the reasons to you. Their logic may surprise you!

And if it’s an argument with a decision to be made, encourage your children to present their point of view. Remember, debating done right is a useful skill. To debate, you have to understand general principles, assemble your evidence, and convince your listeners that your point has more going for it. Your preschoolers are just beginning to have the words and the logical thinking ability to do this kind of rea-

soning, and its good “mental exercise.”

Needless to say there’ll be many times, especially when health and safety are involved, when explanations take too long, and debating a decision is the wrong way to go. Here’s where “the boss” comes in. It helps to have a tone of voice or a look on your face that tells your children immediately that this issue is non-negotiable. Things like hitting or scratching or pushing aren’t up for debate, they’re just not OK. Usually it doesn’t even matter why one twin pushed the other, or who started it. The behavior is wrong and has to stop. Here’s where your twins can learn more about cause and effect: the consequences of fighting, for example, should be clear and unvarying. Time out for both combatants is often a good plan.

Sometimes “I’m the boss” actually is a relief for both parent and children. If you feel the argument is getting too hot, and the struggle has become more important than whatever you’re arguing about, then it’s time to become the authority: “I can tell that you each want to win more than you want to solve the problem. There are too many words, and you are not listening to each other. So I’m going to choose for you.”

Experts have researched three common parenting styles: authoritarian (the basic I’m-the-boss position), authoritative (set limits, but allows for discussion) and permissive (sets almost no limits). You don’t have to be an expert to guess that the moderate, authoritative style wins out in the long run, producing successful young adults who feel good about themselves, both taking initiative and accepting authority appropriately. So the goal is to be authoritative when your preschoolers are in fights, either with each other or with you. That means deciding how and when to discuss and debate. ♡

WAYS TO BUILD YOUR CHILDREN’S DEBATING SKILLS

1. Ask them to explain: “How did you figure that out?” or “Tell me more about why you think this plan will work?”
2. Help them keep track of their ideas or reasons. A debate is a great opportunity to show your children how listing pros and cons work in a decision-making process. Try printing their words on a large sheet of paper or have them draw pictures to represent their ideas.
3. Help them empathize with the other person. Children at this age are ready to have their self-centeredness challenged a bit: “What would happen if I let you take all the clothes off of Caroline’s doll?” “If you always get to choose the cartoon you watch, how is your brother going to feel?”
4. Trust your children’s competence: “I know you can solve this problem. You know the rules, so figure out what the best thing to do is, and tell me what you’ve decided.”
5. Support win-win thinking: “How can we all get at least some of what we want?” The best way to answer this kind of question is by demonstration. When you are in a minor argument with another adult, show your children how compromise can make everyone feel like a winner.

DECIDING HOW TO DECIDE

1. Can you offer a choice? Sometimes the option isn’t open. You need to be clear with your children whether or not they can have input. Transitions from one activity to another are often a situation where there is no room for debate. Bath, meal, and bed times are facts, not open to argument.
2. Can you frame the debate in terms they can understand? For example, you might want to include your daughters in a decision of which preschool they’re going to attend. Don’t ask, “Which school would you like to go to?” That’s far too abstract for their developmental state. Instead, ask specifically what they liked and didn’t like about a school they’ve recently visited. Encourage each child to offer her own thoughts, rather than looking for agreement right away.
3. Can you lay out a decision-making process that fits their sense of what’s fair? For example, the endless argument about who gets the first turn with something desirable can be decided by tossing a coin. It’s quick, and they’re old enough now to understand how objective it is.
4. Can you stay out of the conflict? If it’s between the children, you need to set up a system for them to use, then let them handle it alone, unless your child repeatedly takes advantage of the other. Even identical twins will vary in assertiveness and verbal skills. Does one of your children seem to be a better arguer than the other? You may need to help the quieter child find a way not to get bull-dozed into submission every time there’s a fight. You might require the “pushier” child to convince his twin, not you, and prompt the quieter child if he caves in without trying to be heard.

A Little Privacy, Please

Will Too Much Twin Togetherness Hinder Your Twins' Individuation?

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof

My teenage, fraternal twin sons have been in separate classes for many years and have different interests and personalities. Yet they still hang with the same friends, eat lunch together at school every day, and share a bedroom at home. Although I marvel at their close bond and deep friendship, I also can't help but worry that all this twin togetherness may adversely affect them in the future. When they become adults and part ways, each living his life as a "singleton," for instance, will they be independent, self-assured men or will they rely too much on one another for advice, support, and approval?

Part of the problem is that like many twins my boys lack time alone, separateness, and just plain privacy. "Twins lack privacy because they're born into a situation where they are within their twinship nearly all the time," says Joan Friedman, Ph.D., author of *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children* (Da Capo Press; 2008). "Even before they're born, there's a lack of privacy because they're sharing the womb."

Whether you're a singleton or a multiple, everyone needs time to himself beginning in early childhood. When young twins have a chance to discover life on their own without the interruption of a co-twin, they're free to get a sense of themselves within the context of other children, an important step to developing emo-

tional autonomy. It's during separation, for instance, that twins are able to build a positive self-concept. They learn self-motivation, too. Plus, studies have shown that alone time—those private moments away from everyone—increases one's ability to concentrate, a great skill to have in the classroom. But, more importantly, if twins successfully individuate on their own when they're young, once adolescence and the second phase of autonomy begins, it will be a lot calmer for all. For it's during the pre-teen and teen years that children slowly break away from their parents as they mature into adults, able to make decisions on their own. Those with a healthy sense of self won't have the added struggle of separating from their co-twins as well.

THE TWIN MYTHOLOGY

Friedman, an identical twin herself as well as the mother to 19-year-old fraternal twin boys, notes that some people view twin separation as unhealthy, as if it's something that's going to interfere with the twin relationship. "Twinship, on a whole, is so idealized," she says. "If you're not a twin, it's easy to project that all twins love each other, that they're best friends, and that they need each other. So the idea of twin privacy, separateness, and individuation can shock some people."

In fact, when I interviewed one mom whose 15-year-old identical twin daughters still do everything together, she begged me not to write this article. She believes that some twins never need separation. Yet Deb Daniels of Hartford, Conn. and mother to five-year-old twins, Stephen and Joy, sees it differently. "They're twins and they will always share a special bond, but they're individuals first and foremost."

Most parents are on the right track in helping their twins grow and develop. "I've always strived since the day they were born to treat them as individuals, not as twins," says Juliann Baker of her 11-year-old fraternal twin girls, Abigail and Natalie. This Thomaston, Conn. mom laid the groundwork early by encouraging her daughters and their younger brother to pursue separate activities. Although Baker quickly found out that her good intentions were turning her into a taxi driver as she motored all over town to various sport fields, her strategy showed her kids that each was unique and special.

Sara Boretz of Upland, Calif. celebrates her 15-year-old identical twins daughters' differences. "Each has carved out her own niche," she notes. Elise, for instance, is into her music and loves the precision of the marching band, while Suzanne enjoys drama and visual arts. Both girls spend plenty of time apart with their various activities but Boretz sees this as a positive. "They really do get along amazingly well and I think a lot of it is because they're often apart for long periods of time."

BEGIN THE PROCESS WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG

Cheryl Lage, author of *Twinspirations: Real-Life Advice from Pregnancy Through the First Year* (Taylor Trade Publishing; 2006) and mother to seven-year-old twins, Darren and Sarah, says her daughter began asking for "space" at age two! "We'd offer encouragement and support by suggesting another activity for the other, non-space needing twin," she says. "For instance, we'd say, 'Why don't you come over here and read to me while your sister does her artwork?' We've found this to be very effective."

But it's not unusual for toddler twins to want to spend every waking minute together and it can be difficult to separate the pair. Like most families with young twins, Christine Houston's six-year-old fraternal twin boys, George and Max, share a close relationship. "I know this will change with age, but right now my twins are in the honeymoon phase and enjoy the intimacy," says the Glen Ridge, N.J. mom. "They're very much synchronized and in tune with each other."

Still, parents need to think about how they can gently prepare their twins for life as a singleton down the road.



Furthermore, moms and dads shouldn't rely solely on their twins asking for more separation and privacy, but instead parents should look for subtle signs that more individual space is needed. Although Melissa Rocker's four-year-old fraternal twin daughter is protective of her co-twin in their shared pre-school classroom, the Fort Lauderdale, Fla. mom isn't sure her kids are ready to make the leap to two different classrooms next year. "The teacher told me that when they were turn taking with the entire class and it was Michael's turn to look around the room and locate things hidden with a specific letter, Madison kept helping him, but not helping anyone else when they had trouble," she explains. "Obviously it would take a lot more than that example for me to absolutely be sure that they needed to be separated in school."

According to Friedman, however, parents should be proactive, as most twins wouldn't think of saying they want to separate from a co-twin for fear it would hurt their sibling's feelings. "Parents shouldn't wait for their children to ask for separation. Parents should provide these things," Friedman notes. Whether it's a separate bedroom, classroom, or hobby, when your multiples demonstrate that they're ready, Friedman says to go for it. "Parents need to think with some forethought that it's their responsibility to set up boundaries. They have to stop thinking that it's going to emanate from the twinship itself, because it's not."

Even before the birth of her fraternal triplets, Maureen Kinney of Cooper City, Fla. set the stage for three independent little people. First, she and her husband decided on vastly different names for their children and then gave each a separate bedroom painted and decorated to each child's preferences and styles. "I think this has gone a long way in encouraging separateness," Kinney says of her four-years-olds, Samantha, Toby, and Jordan. "Although they are still fiercely attached and emotionally tuned into one another, they present themselves as separate beings with different likes and dislikes."

Obviously not everyone can offer their twins the luxury of separate bedrooms, but even carving out individual space within the same room is step in the right direction. Give each child a wall to decorate, for instance, or his own personal bookcase where he can display special trophies, vacation souvenirs, or just his favorite stories.

In our house, I try to make up for the lack of an extra bedroom in other ways. For instance, we now allow

one twin to stay home alone while the rest of us go on a family hike on weekends. For those few hours, one or the other gets full reign of an empty house to do as he pleases.

Offering time alone with just one parent or an available relative is another great way to give each child some space away from a co-twin, too. Deb Daniels' twins and older singleton daughter regularly take turns sleeping over at Grandma's house. "We also try to have regular one-on-one time with each of them," she says. "We also do the "just the girls" or "just the guys" (Dad and Stephen) thing."


ZYGOSITY COUNTS

There's no question that in their quest for individuation, boy-girl twins have it a bit easier than same-sex twins. "Boygirl twins can separate naturally as they get older because they have many opportunities to gravitate toward genderspecific activities," Friedman says. Furthermore, she adds, many oppositegender twins don't have the same societal pressure to be "best friends."

Alicia Gutierrez describes her 14-year-old twins, Cristina and Nicolas, as "very tight," but the Miami, Fla. mom also says at this age, they're very independent of each other, too. "They have separated themselves by having different interests and friends," she notes. These days she tries instead to find ways in which they can spend more time together! "When Nick is going to the movies with some friends, for instance, I ask him to ask his sister to go. Sometimes she goes, and other times she doesn't."

Lucia Fernandez of Alta Loma, Calif. agrees. "It's easier for boy-girl twins to separate as they get older," she says of her 16-year-old twins, Francesca and Dallas. "They're naturally involved in separate activities because of their interests."

IT'S ALL IN YOUR ATTITUDE

Offering individual space and encouraging separate activities are a few concrete ways that parents can help their twins cultivate autonomy. It's those small, tolerable doses of separation, Friedman stresses, that will help your twins get to know themselves outside of their twinship. "Your overall goal is to help them individuate," she says. "All those little experiences throughout their lives really prepare them for when they have to deal with the challenges of adolescence." 

Postpartum depression:

A very real syndrome,
especially with
twinfants

by Lisa Stukel

Some medical research indicates PPD can be even more severe following the births of twins or triplets, because a woman's body has had to adjust hormonally to the drastic physical demands of multiple babies in utero. Readjustment following the births, therefore, is all the more dramatic, which can send a new mom of twins into a total tailspin. Even the most emotionally-balanced, usually-rational moms can find themselves thrown for a loop by PPD. It's important to recognize the signs early and seek help.



I remember my pregnancy fondly. There isn't a better feeling in the world than that first "butterfly flutter" inside the tummy.

Yet having two lives growing inside me was scary at times. Could there possibly be enough space for two? How would my body possibly get large enough for these lives to grow?

Well, amazingly enough, it did—and I ended up on bedrest when I reached 28 weeks. It was then that waves of nerves coupled with restless nights started me on the road to serious post-partum depression.

All my dreams for a pregnancy with cute maternity clothes and savoring every moment edging toward delivery were shattered at my 28-week ultrasound. My cervix had shortened and I had to quit work and stay in bed at home with a uterine monitoring machine to signal any contractions, and a tributaline pump. I'd been a 1st grade teacher for 10 years and found it difficult to leave my beloved students.

I traded in my pastel maternity clothes for extra-large sweat-shirts and sweat pants. The couch and I became close relatives for six weeks. I read books, watched leaves grow on my maple tree and dust settle under my couch. Doctor appointments were the highlights of my weeks. At my lowest times I thought: "It could be worse. Some women spend their entire pregnancy on bedrest in the hospital. At



least I get to be home with lots of help to get me through the rough time."

I delivered identical twin boys at almost 33½ weeks. Luckily, our boys were 4 lbs. 15 oz., and 4 lbs. 6 oz., on oxygen only one night. One son was in NICU two weeks; the other, two and a half weeks, mainly to learn how to suck, swallow and breathe in order to eat.

The first baby was delivered vaginally and the second by c-section. I remember feeling quite sad that they were instantly whisked away from me to be taken to NICU. I remember lying there listening to babies with their new mothers in rooms around me, thinking it wasn't fair that I had carried two lives, spent six weeks on the couch, and had no babies alongside me to show for it. I worried about their health. I hadn't even had time to count their fingers and toes. My

husband brought me two Polaroid pictures of my boys and I cried looking at them.

For weeks afterward, one stressful event occurred after another. My heart had a gaping hole because my boys remained at the hospital while I went home. I felt disappointment, guilt and failure. I kept wondering, "Had I done something during pregnancy to cause this?"

Or, conversely, did I not do something that might have prevented this?

Looking back, I think

this was when my depression started. Everything I had dreamed of had turned inside out. I had eaten right, exercised, read books, did everything the doctors told me to do. So why was this happening to me? My husband and I spent each day visiting our sons in their little cribs hooked up to beeping machines. I wanted to breastfeed so I pumped all day and every evening into bottles. This was my only real connection to my boys, my gift to them when we were apart.

My breast milk probably did help our sons leave the hospital quickly. When the doctor told us the boys were ready to go home, my emotions swirled in an array of seeming contradictions. Elation. Fear. Nervous tension. We'd go from round-the-clock nurses, doctors, and machines caring for my helpless babies, to...nothing. Me. Alone. "How are we going to do this?" I wondered.

The morning we were to pick up our boys we learned #1 son would be coming home, but not #2 son, who appeared to have a minor breathing problem and a heart-rate drop. He would remain in NICU until he experienced no difficulties at all for an entire five-day period.

I sat and sobbed, telling my husband I couldn't take any more stress and feeling as if I were having a nervous breakdown. With my husband's help, I pulled myself together and we went to get our first bundle of joy.

Taking one baby home and leaving our other son in NICU was too much for me to handle, in my state. I cried at the hospital and all the way home, sad because I was a terrible mother who couldn't be both places at once with my babies.

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Postpartum depression and multiples

by Rebecca Moskwinski, MD

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a prevalent psychiatric disorder. The responsibilities of caring for a new baby, or multiple babies, can be overwhelming, even for the best prepared women.

“Postpartum blues” is the most common syndrome following birth and is not considered a psychiatric disorder. It is different from true postpartum depression.

Postpartum blues typically last less than two weeks and consist of symptoms such as fatigue, trouble concentrating, irritability, mood swings, and fluctuations in appetite. In an NOMOTC study, 40% of women experienced the “blues” after their multiple pregnancy. Interestingly, only 22.5% experienced the “blues” after their singleton pregnancy, which is lower than expected. In about 20% of all cases, blues will develop into major depression.

PPD, on the other hand, consists of a spectrum of symptoms—usually five or more symptoms in a combination of some type—lasting two weeks or more. Postpartum depression has been shown in other studies to have a prevalence of 10% to 15% in the first postpartum year. In a study done by NOMOTC this figure was confirmed, with 11% of women developing postpartum depression after their singleton births.

One-third of twin-moms experience PPD

With the births of multiples, however, the study by NOMOTC showed that the rate of postpartum depression rises to a level of 33%. In addition, 72% of the women who participated in this survey also felt that their depression after multiples was worse (deeper, longer) than after their singleton (of those that had both).

The higher rate of PPD following births of multiples could be due to larger fluctuations of hormone levels following a multiple birth pregnancy, but this has not been consistently identified as a

causal factor. In fact, the cause of PPD has yet to be determined. In recent years, increasing numbers of multiple births are the result of assisted reproduction techniques such as fertility medications. These also affect hormonal fluctuations. NOMOTC’s study showed that of the women who used fertility medications to become pregnant, 40% reported a depression lasting longer than two weeks.

Frighteningly high number fail to seek help!

Alarmingly, the NOMOTC study revealed fully 17% of women listing “thoughts of suicide or hurting others” failed to seek professional help while in the grip of PPD. Also, 49% who reported five or more PPD symptoms (and an astounding 31.5% who reported having seven or more symptoms!) didn’t report depression to their doctors. Perhaps societal pressure (i.e., expectations that women be fulfilled and happy following the births of their children) keeps women from recognizing the importance of their symptoms and what they imply.

Joining a multiples’ support group was helpful to 70% of the mothers. Networking with other mothers in a similar situation helps women of newborn twin infants realize they are not alone and the feelings they experience are not unique to them.

Most women suffering from PPD can be helped with one of the many medications available for depression. Anti-depressant medications are generally safe and effective, and can begin relieving symptoms within a week or two, although they take a full four weeks to come to full effect.

Most physicians treating a mother for PPD want her to also participate in counseling during treatment, but medication should be started even if there is a delay in getting counseling. (Many antidepressant medications are contraindicated for women breastfeeding their babies or pumping in order to bottlefeed breastmilk to their infants—in other words, “not indicated” because they are possibly inappropriate. ♡)

While at home caring for my son, my mind was always in another place.

My husband and I were up with our first son every two hours, taking turns feeding by both breast and bottle. I was so nervous and scared. I'd had no idea how difficult caring for a newborn baby would be. I really felt stupid. Here I was, a teacher with a Master's degree, and I barely knew how to put a diaper on correctly. I sat at 3 a.m., totally exhausted and thinking to myself, "This is just one baby. How can we possibly take care of two?"

My feelings of anxiety were beyond description. Nothing reassured or soothed me, not my husband nor family and friends.

Number-2 son came home after only five days and then the pressure built. At times I remember those first few months vividly; at other times, they are a blur—feeding schedules, diaper changes, sleep deprivation.

That summer—my favorite time of year—would prove to be like no other. I heard the roar of lawn mowers, the humming of bees, neighbors going to work and I'd think, "Life is moving on and I am locked in this house pumping, changing diapers, feeding and not sleeping!"

Nothing seemed to help

My husband, also a teacher, was able to be with me a lot and we worked side-by-side to get things done. That saved my sanity. Wonderful friends made dinners, and grandparents and aunts came to relieve us so we'd get a much-needed nap, and some adult conversation.

I made time to ride my bike, take a walk and go to dinner with my husband. I took the boys for walks when it was safe. I went to friends' houses, a graduation party and visited grandparents.

Despite all of these things being done for me, enabling me to escape my captivity much more than many other parents of twins ever can, I remained desperately unhappy. I cried uncontrollably at times for absolutely no reason. I sobbed for the loss of my inde-

pendence, weeping as I viewed pictures of our eight-year marriage and mourning the life we left behind.

One day I tried to figure out how to wear a Baby Bjorn frontcarrier, and went into complete hysterics, upsetting both babies in the process. My clothes began to hang loosely on me because I was never hungry. The dark circles and bags under my eyes grew larger from crying and lack of sleep. My mind was a locked cocoon of dreary thoughts.

Normally, I'd been such a happy person. Before Babies, that is. This overwhelming sadness was so foreign to me. I was even depressed that my own sad thoughts interfered with my ability to bond with our babies. I worried I would ruin my marriage. My husband was so good to me, yet I found no comfort from him or anyone close to me.

I kept thinking, "What is wrong with me?" I'd read about postpartum depression, but never thought I'd go through it. I blithely dismissed it; therefore, I didn't know how to deal with it.

'I was afraid I'd hurt my babies!'

A close friend with whom I spoke thought I needed medication, making me feel even worse. Could it possibly be that I wasn't normal? Horrors! Not me.

A couple of times, I had to leave the house because I was so angry that my sons wouldn't stop crying. I'd hand the babies to my husband and walk away, for fear I'd pat them too hard when burping them in the middle of the night or hurt them in some other way, poor things.

My recurring worry was that I wasn't cut out to be a mom. How could I be experiencing inner rage at a 2-week-old baby? Is that possible? It pained me to have these feelings and not know how to deal with them.

At a post-partum appointment, my midwife reassured me these were all normal feelings, giving me the option of medication. She knew my low opinion of taking medication of this type, so she suggested I walk out of the room or leave the house when my insides boiled with irritation at the babies' howls. These tactics did help me.

I told myself some depression does require intervention with medicine, but rationalized that many too



many people opt for medication too quickly. I was determined to use my positive mind and spirit to regain my old self, to get back on track. And that is exactly what I did.

But not before hitting some more bumps in the road. I had several more breakdowns when I thought I was getting better. I hit rock bottom shortly after my husband went back to work after taking family leave. The boys were almost three months old but still needed feeding quite often, two to three times in the middle of each night. I'd spent an entire day at home coping with continuous crying and soiled diapers.

Seeking nutrition, hydration and...sleep!

Thoughts of missing my career assaulted me and I questioned my decision to resign from teaching. My life spiraled down to depths I couldn't conceive.

My husband arrived home to find me sobbing uncontrollably. He stayed with the boys while I went upstairs to our bedroom, where I rocked and rocked myself as I lay on the bed crying so hard it hurt. My husband knocked to see if I was okay. He was there to help, but I needed to be by myself.

I talked to myself. I will never forget the moment I said to myself, "No one is going to pull me out of this depression but myself." I took a long series of deep breaths and fell asleep until morning. I had picked up the pieces and decided I was going to discard my negative ball of energy.

I began eating right, taking vitamins, drinking lots of water, and sleeping when my children slept. I accepted babysitting offers and slept. I paid more attention to my husband and joined a twin support group. I consulted a book about getting babies on a nap schedule.

The day I realized this depression was within my power to control was the day I took hold of my life again. And I was able to do it without medication.

There's hope for moms who go through this, especially mothers of twins. If I time-traveled back and could relive those months, I would read more about

post-partum depression and take it much more seriously. I'd talk to more moms like me, whose longtime careers were very important to them and who'd been married for a long time Before Babies. Talking to others whose lives were very different from mine didn't help at all.

I needed to find friends with similar backgrounds, job experiences and philosophies on taking care of children. I needed open-minded advice and people I closely identified with.

In retrospect, I should have listened to my sister, a dietician, who told me over and over to keep drinking liquids and eat right, even if I felt no immediate hunger. Had I done so, I might have escaped my depression sooner, or avoided it altogether.

But life is a learning experience. I learned a lot from my experience. I escaped unscathed, along with my husband and children, and for that I am so grateful, because some women do not. I now understand how women can be driven to completely break down, especially single mothers or women whose marriages are crumbling. But being in control of myself and having self-determination is always a part of me and I won't let anyone tell me differently, no matter what my situation may be.

My boys are older now and I treasure each minute with them. I sometimes feel twinges of remorse when I reexamine those days when I was overcome by sadness and guilt. But if I can help other new mothers of twins realize these feelings are normal, it's all worth it.



Had I known then what I know now...

We can all learn from the lessons life hands us. And my advice to other women who are preparing for their twins to arrive is this: Educate yourself about PPD. And take it seriously. Don't expect anything to be easy. Listen to your

doctors, family and openminded advice. Eat and sleep whenever you can. Most important, believe in yourself. You can overcome any obstacle after delivering twins and my story proves it. ♥



“Whose memory is it, anyway?”

by Jennifer S. Dahlen

Long before I became the mother of twins, I had a glimpse into their lives, because my mom is a twin. Throughout my childhood my mom, Sue, and her twin sister, Esther, took center stage at family gatherings, as they told stories about growing up. One story stood out from the rest, and always began with my mom or Esther blurting out, “Remember when we cut our toe?”

The story itself was simple: The barefoot country girls were exploring an abandoned building, when one of them caught her foot on an old piece of pipe, slicing the skin between her toes. Her sister ran to get help. The fascinating part is that both Sue and Esther claimed to be the one cut and bleeding. Both remembered the pain and the blood. Both remembered her sister running to get help. And both insisted she had a scar to prove it. But after shedding shoes and socks, neither could come up with a convincing scar, so the memory, like so many other things twins share, became both of theirs.

As if joined at the foot, Sue and Esther resolved their disagreement by sharing the injured toe.

The “disputed memories” phenomenon

As strange as this story may sound, the phenomenon of “disputed memories” between twins is actually quite common. According to a study by psychologists at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and the University at Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, “disputed memories are a relatively common occurrence among twins.”

In their 2001 study, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin defined a “disputed memory” as “a memory in which two people agree on most of the details of what happened, but disagree on (the person) to whom the event occurred.” Their study concluded that disputed memories “occur frequently among twins.”

Sandra Miller, an identical twin from Portland, Ore., echoes the study’s findings. She and her sister, Karen, have disagreed about many events over the years. Sandra recalls a skiing incident when she and her sister were young girls. “I was on the ski-lift and Karen was trying to climb on with me,” Sandra says. “Karen slipped and fell to the snow below. I remember Karen yelling, ‘Hang on! Don’t let go of me!’ but I couldn’t hang on. I know I was the one on the lift because I remember seeing Karen’s

face looking up at me from the snow, and I remember feeling remorse later for failing to hang onto my sister.”

But Sandra says Karen remembers it the other way. “Karen says that she was sitting on the ski-lift and I was the one who fell.”

In their most recent study published in the journal, *Genes, Brain and Behavior* (2006), Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin sought to determine why some memories are disputed. Their findings showed when twins dispute a memory, “they claim for themselves memories for achievements and suffered misfortunes, but are more likely to give away memories of personal wrongdoing.” When twins do this, they have noticed, “claims to the ownership of memories are frequently self-serving.”

Disputed memories and the general population

Are disputed memories limited to twins? In their first study, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin included same-sex twins (both identical and fraternal), siblings close in age, and same-sex friends. Although they occasionally reported disputed memories among the non-twin groups, this occurred much less often than with twins. Zygosity was not a factor in the number of disputed memories among the twins, and boy/girl twins were not part of the study.

These researchers offer three reasons why twins may be more likely to have disputed memories:

- Twins share a close upbringing
- Twins have a high degree of empathy with each other
- Twins are more likely to talk to each other about their shared past, thereby discovering disputed memories.

One implication of this study is to question whether or not many of us have memories we have stolen from others. The majority of disputed memories are from events occurring in late childhood, so it is possible that some of us have “stolen” a memory from someone in our past. But the person we took it from is not around to correct us.

Can parents help twins resolve disputed memories?

Parents seemingly could offer information to help twins settle their conflicting memories. Unfortunately, in the

The majority of disputed memories are from events occurring in late childhood, so it is possible that some of us have “stolen” a memory from someone in our past.

case of my mom and her sister, they didn’t discover the memory was disputed until after their parents died. Sandra Miller says, “Most of the disputes between Karen and me were too insignificant for our parents to remember, or our parents were not present at the time.”

In an attempt to see if parents could help resolve memory disputes, Sheen, Kemp, and Rubin asked parents of twins to name events that occurred to only one twin. Later, when they asked the twins about these events, only 2 of the 60 incidents were ever disputed by the twins. Interestingly, however, in 10 out of the 60 incidents, the twins agreed with each other about who was the central player, but disagreed with their parents!

Good news about disputed memories

The good news ascertained by these studies is that usually “disputed memories are not of very important events.” The researchers suspect it would be difficult to dispute memories of greater importance, such as who got straight A’s in high school, or who broke their arm, because there would be corroborating evidence to support one side.

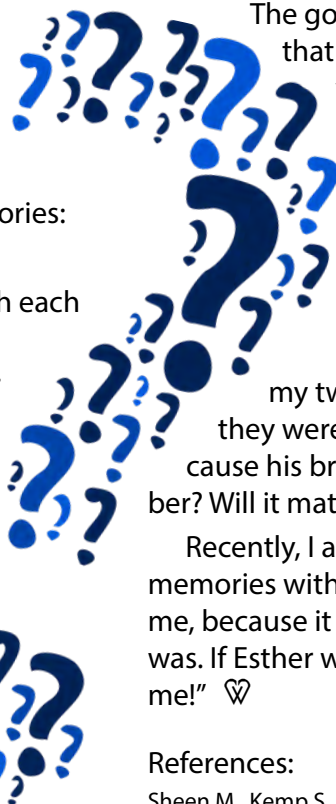
Sometimes I wonder which memories my twin boys will debate. Will they both say they were the one who slept on the top bunk, because his brother was scared to do so? Will I remember? Will it matter?

Recently, I asked my mom how she felt about sharing memories with her twin sister. She said, “It doesn’t bother me, because it doesn’t really matter which one of us it was. If Esther wants to have the cut toe, that’s fine with me!”

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A Sensitive Subject:

BED-WETTING

Approaching the Problem with a Positive Attitude

by Christine F. Ridout

Bed-wetting is a difficult subject for any child, but the problem is aggravated in twins if one is dry at night and one isn't. Because multiples often use each other as points of reference, the child who is wetting the bed may feel doubly embarrassed and his self-esteem may be undermined. There is also a chance that the dry twin will tease him, making the situation worse. Experts say that children take their cues from the parents: If mom and dad are relaxed about bed-wetting, the kids will be, too.

Children vary enormously in their ability to achieve nighttime dryness. This is particularly true for boy/girl twins because girls typically achieve control earlier than boys. Even same-sex twins show a great deal of variation in their ability to attain nighttime control. According to Dr. Rehka Agrawal, assistant professor of pediatric nephrology at Loyola

University, there are two kinds of bed-wetting – continuous and discontinuous. Continuous bed-wetting means a child has never achieved nighttime dryness. It is most common in boys and can last to the age of 10, sometimes longer.

Most bed-wetters (80%) are continuous, and the condition is simply a matter of bladder maturation. It also tends to be inherited. Parents of bed wetters frequently were bed wetters themselves.

In contrast, discontinuous wetting begins after a child has been dry for a long time. It is usually triggered by stress. However, Dr. Agrawal emphasizes that physical problems, such as urinary tract infections, must first be ruled out. The two types of bed-wetting require different responses, but both must be handled with sensitivity.



IF ONE TWIN HAS NEVER BEEN DRY

Dr. Alexander Goldbin, director of child psychiatry at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, says the best approach to nighttime wetting is a calm, relaxed attitude that doesn't communicate anxiety and shows confidence in the child's ability to achieve dryness. Never punish shame or compare the child to his twin. If the dry twin is the one who has also achieved other developmental milestones first, parents must be especially sensitive to how this will affect the relationship and the co-twin's self-esteem.

Most children, who are continuous bed-wetters, stay in diapers at night while they are still young. If one twin is still wetting, put his diapers on quietly and in privacy. If you're really tactful, the dry child may not even be aware that his twin wets at night. However, if the dry twin is aware – and there's no need to deliberately hide it – Dr. Goldbin recommends dealing with it matter-of-factly, explaining that children mature at different rates and that his twin will be dry soon, too. Dr. Goldbin also points out that many twins are extremely supportive of each other and that you can enlist the support of the dry twin.

AS THEY GET OLDER

If your twin does not achieve dryness by the age of 4 or 5, he may begin to resist diapers. Both Dr. Goldbin and Dr. Lane Robson, director of pediatric nephrology at Children's Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina, say that a child should not be forced to wear diapers if he finds it humiliating. Let the child make the decision and then deal as best you can with the wet bedding. When diapers do come off, there are ways to minimize the bed-wetting problem:

- Enlist the child's cooperation in solving the problem.
- Make it clear that you will be helpful and supportive.
- If he wakes in the night, he should be able to put on dry clothes and deal with his bedding so he doesn't disturb the family
- Let him know that if he is wet in the morning, he should change his clothes and strip his bed

Bed-wetting can also create significant social problems for older multiples who are invited to sleepovers or who want to go to camp. Being a multiple, and often participating in the same social group, accentuates the issue and hurts the child who hasn't achieved dryness.

You may have to face the issue of whether one goes and one doesn't. If you require the dry one to stay home, he may feel resentful that he can't go because of

his twin. On the other hand, he may be supportive and not feel it's a big deal.


DISCONTINUOUS WETTING

If one twin returns to wetting in response to stress, you should handle the situation much as you would if he were a continuous wetter, with a few variations.

Carefully consider the issue of whether he will return to diapers. This is particularly embarrassing for a child who has been dry a long time and whose twin remains dry. Express confidence in his ability to achieve dryness again.

By being as low-key as possible, the other twin may not be aware of the problem. If he is, explain what has happened and ask him to be supportive.

If your child returns to wetting, it's important to identify and reduce the stress that may be causing it. Dr. Joan Luby, assistant professor of psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis; suggests that you ask yourself what was going on just before the wetting began. She also recommends looking for patterns, keeping a log of what happened each day and whether your child was wet that night.

Common childhood problems are frequently accentuated in multiples. This is certainly the case with bedwetting. But all doctors emphasize that as the child matures, the wetting almost invariably stops. Continue to be calm and supportive. However, do seek help if the child is suffering with the problem. Many treatments are available. 

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Dry Days, Wet Nights by Maribeth Boelts is a story of a young rabbit who eventually outgrows his bed-wetting with the love and support of his parents.

Dry All Night by Alison Mack is a book that is divided into two parts: one for parents and one for children.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The National Kidney Foundation provides information on bed-wetting and has a Physicians Referral Network. For more information visit their website: <http://www.kidney.org>

A Guide to the Treatment of Enuresis for Professionals by Penny Dobson is a book that's intended for professionals. However, it's very readable and very useful for parents. The book has chapters on assessment, treatment methods, choosing a treatment program, dealing with relapse and advising the older child. Order it from the Simon Foundation: http://www.simonfoundation.org/Education_Materials.html



Special Plate

by Lynn Ticknor

Last fall, my twins were constantly at each others' throats. They were on a neverending cycle of grabbing, pushing and yelling. What unnerved me most was the name-calling and general disrespect they showed towards each other.

"Give me that! I want it now!" screamed my son, Jack.

"No, it's mine! Get away, you nasty boy!" hollered Abigail.

"You're a stupid-head," he yelled back.

"Mommmeeee!"

This was a typical exchange between them a year ago. "Why do they act this way?" I thought to myself. Since my husband, Alan, and I firmly believe that children learn by our example, I became concerned about my behavior and interactions with other people. I try to be polite and show appreciation for other people, but, admittedly, I'm not always very good at it. I can be short with others and demanding at times, especially towards those I love most.

I wanted my behavior to be a positive example for my children. Something had to change.

Then I remembered a little technique called Special Plate that I heard about at a parenting class I took. It's incredibly simple to do—there's no advance planning, no costs involved and it doesn't take any additional time out of busy lives. With nothing to lose, my husband and I decided to give it a try.

That night, while I was setting the dinner table, I took out a purple plastic plate that we had never used before and set it on my daughter's placemat. The difference was quite noticeable, since all other plates around the table were our

usual white ones. As Abigail approached, she said, "Hey, this isn't my plate. What's going on here?"

"You've got Special Plate tonight, sweetie," I said.

"What's Special Plate?" she asked, wrinkling up her nose as if I had just given her a serving of brussels sprouts (her least favorite vegetable).

Taking a deep breath and hoping for a positive reaction, I explained that at dinner each night someone gets Special Plate. During dinner, each family member takes turns saying one thing they appreciate about the person eating off Special Plate. Special Plate rotates to a different person each night (for simplicity's sake, ours rotates from youngest to oldest).

I waited for Abigail's reaction. Finally, she said, "Well, what if Jack has Special Plate and I can't think of anything that I appreciate about him?"

"Hmmm, good question," I thought to myself. I didn't have an answer readily at hand. Luckily, my husband jumped in and said, "If nothing immediately comes to mind, you can pass until you can think of something to say," he explained. Then he quickly added, "But you have to say something before dinner is over."

As we began eating, she was obviously still wondering about this whole new idea. "Why are we doing this?" she asked.

"Just for fun," I responded, trying to act casual. My husband and I had agreed not to associate this with the lectures we had used in the past about appreciating each other more, respecting others, being more caring, blah, blah, blah. We

also agreed that if it wasn't fun after a few nights of trying it, we would not continue.

"Well, I guess this will be OK. Go ahead, what do you appreciate about me?" Abigail asked.

I commented that I appreciated how she had put her dishes in the sink after lunchtime. My husband shared that he appreciated how she continued to work on her penmanship even though it was a challenging task that often frustrated her. She beamed with pride as we were giving her this feedback. The only problem was when we had finished she sat quietly for a moment, smirked and said, "What else do you appreciate about me?"

At that point, we reminded her that each person had to say one thing that they appreciated (and only one thing). She sighed and said, "I guess I'll just have to wait until next time."

She finished her dinner more animated than ever and I think she was even calculating which night of the week she'd have Special Plate again. After dinner, she cleared the table (without prompting) and volunteered to help vacuum the floor and wipe the countertops!

Since our youngest son was only 2 when we began Special Plate, I helped him articulate specific things he appreciated about family members. Now that he is older, he comes up with things on his own, such as "I appreciate that Daddy rode bikes with me today," and "I appreciate that Aba (his way of saying Abigail) shared her sidewalk chalk with me."

Added benefits of Special Plate are the acknowledgements my husband and I share when we are the recipients of Special Plate. Like many couples, we often take each other for granted or assume that the other person knows we appreciate certain efforts. Special Plate gives me an opportunity to acknowledge the small things my husband does that make my days a little easier (such as filling the car with gas or calling to tell me he is going to be later than expected). These things may have gone unmentioned during a busy week of work, carpools, swim lessons, errands and laundry.

Special Plate reserves just a few minutes each day to communicate gratitude and appreciation and it provides us with an opportunity to be positive role models for Abigail and Jack.

It's been a year since we started doing Special Plate and we still enjoy hearing affirming comments about ourselves. I don't know how long we'll continue. I guess until it's no

longer fun. One of the reasons I think it has worked so well is that we started when the kids were young. We haven't had much resistance, and, when we do, we make light of it and move on. If they'd been 8 or 11, they may have resisted more, or might have refused to participate at all. Another reason it has worked is that, even with our busy schedules, we still have a family dinner four to five times a week. We use Special Plate every time we are all eating dinner together.

There have been times when Special Plate has been a challenge. On days filled with temper tantrums, power struggles and little cooperation among family members, it's hard to conjure appreciative feelings. On several occasions, my husband and I have wracked our brains for relevant and recent positive comments. We've had anxious moments, but we've always been able to come up with something we sincerely appreciate, no matter how small.

After one particularly trying day, the only thing I could honestly say that I appreciated about my daughter was that she drew a very colorful picture in school and gave it to me to hang on the refrigerator.

In the past year, I have seen a difference in our interactions that has extended past the dinner hour. Sure, the kids still argue sometimes, but now they notice the things they appreciate about each other. And they are less inclined to argue over little things. Rarely do they resort to name-calling or harsh words any more.

This summer, while my kids were playing together on the beach, another mom commented about how respectful my children were to each other.

"Your kids speak so politely with each other," she said.

"Not always," I responded remembering a less-than-friendly interaction between the two of them just hours before.

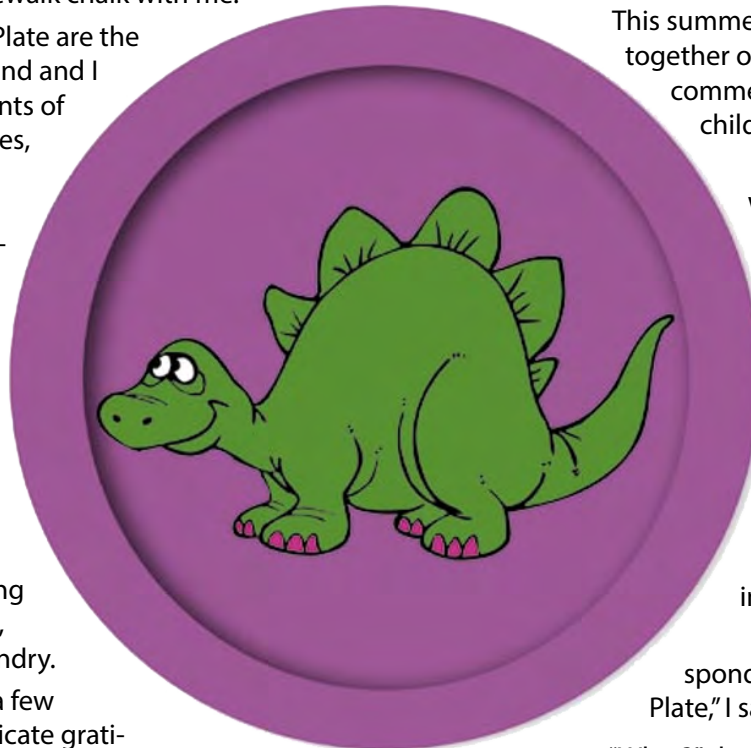
"But when I watch your children playing together, it's almost like they really . . . um . . . appreciate each other. How do you nurture that type of interaction?" she asked.

It didn't take me long to respond; the answer was clear. "Special Plate," I said.

"What?" she responded, clearly confused by my answer.

"Special Plate," I said again.

And then I explained how this little parenting technique had helped all of us to appreciate each other. ♥



My Laundry Basket:

Living La Vida Loca

by Julie Blair

You'd think the new, shiny trampoline with the 13-foot enclosure would be the big hit at our house these days. Or, perhaps you'd guess everyone's favorite would be the pool. Filled with 35 floaties, various wooden boats, several diving toys and a waterfall, you'd think it would get a lot of love during the dog days of summer.

But, alas, even the tri-colored plastic roller coaster that sits in our vast forested backyard sits dormant these days. No, the hit of the month has been—drum-roll please—my laundry basket. It is fabulous if I do say so myself. I bought the white plastic model at an area Linens-N-Things seven years ago in Rockville, Maryland. It came with a thoughtful indent for the hip. There's also an oversized lip around the circumference for ease in gripping the container when an Everest of clothing spills over its edges.

Unfortunately, I'm not the only one to note its form and function. Sometime in early August, my four-year-old twins com mandeered the laundry basket for higher purposes. Suddenly, I began finding mini-moguls of shirts, pants and

"I'm pretty sure no toy has seen this much action in my house since my kids discovered balls moved at around nine months."

socks piled up in various rooms throughout the house. No sooner would I stack an ironed, folded load of darks into the basket and someone would tip the load into the bathtub and steal away with the container.

Last Friday, I found five separate heaps of clothing dumped unceremoniously in the hallway like piles of fall leaves



recently raked. Meanwhile, the laundry basket was having a marvelous time.

It first morphed into a boat. Will pushed various stuffed animals—and then his screaming sister—"through" the "Small World" ride at "Disney World." When that was over, it became the only prop in a dramatic afternoon at the

Olympic Games. First, Will used it as the uneven bars, straddling the sides like Nastia Liukin before sticking a dismount on the playroom floor. Next, Elizabeth had a turn with my laundry basket. Following a hair-raising floor routine performed in a tutu to the tune of Abba's "Dancing Queen," she upended the container and accepted a gold medal standing atop the laundry basket. It was, of course, a podium. Afterwards, she pushed it over to her dolls, stripped one nude and gave it a bath in the container.

The laundry basket also had a turn as a grocery cart, a car and a circus cage. I'm pretty sure no toy has seen this much action in my house since my kids discovered balls moved at around nine months. So I wasn't surprised earlier this week when Will made a simple request. Following a rather rough day at physical therapy, I offered him a reward for his endeavors. "Would you like a new truck from Target?" I asked, "Or how about a new Matchbox car?" Will shook his head. "Momma," he said, a huge grin spreading across his face, "May I get my own laundry basket?" And so we did. It is bright blue. ♡

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- 2 Isaiah and Zoey
- 3 Gafaone and Goitseone
- 4 Amelia and Adeline
- 5 Nakiesha and Nathaniel
- 6 Maxine and Molly
- 7 Jonah and Jacoby
- 8 Lesly and Rebecca
- 9 Audrey and Aubree
- 10 Dillon and Declan
- 11 Abbie and Ellie
- 12 Natalie and Sophia
- 13 Maddie and Kenzie
- 14 Paislee and Jaylee

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DOUBLETAKES





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- 15 Ella and Ava
- 16 Theo and Thomas
- 17 Jordan and Jaxon
- 18 Bella and Carolyn
- 19 Alexander and Taylor
- 20 Sophie and Aimee
- 21 Georgia and Lleyton
- 22 Aria and Mia
- 23 Madison and Colin
- 24 Ashton and Lennon
- 25 Sterling and Delilah
- 26 Greyson and Connor
- 27 Piper and Paisley
- 28 Addi and Britt

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