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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005

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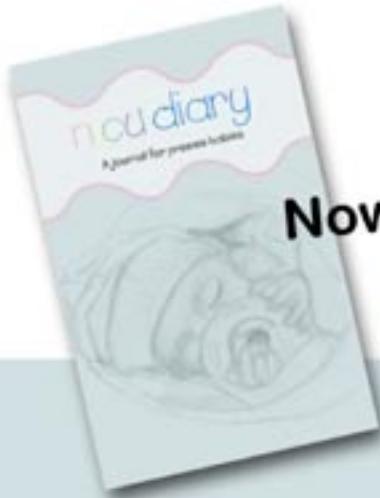
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ON THE COVER

Mariah, (left) and Carmen (right) Nelsch, are 4-year-old twins born in Centennial, Colorado, at 30 weeks. Mariah weighed 3.2 lbs. and Carmen weighed in at 3.9 lbs. They have an older sister, Jordan, 7, and a younger sister, Kelli, 3. They love their ballet classes, dress-up, their two dogs and swimming. When Mariah introduces herself she proudly announces, "I'm a twin!" to which Carmen just rolls her eyes. Their Gramma Carolyn is TWINS Magazine's Art Director.

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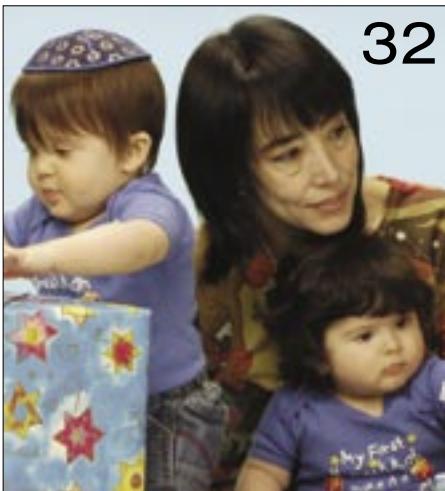
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Special gifts of the season

I have so much to write about and discuss with you this month. Much too much to fit into this small space, I am sure. First of all, I am thrilled to be "back in the saddle" producing TWINS™ Magazine day-to-day, after running a sizable business for many years and having too little time to be totally hands-on with TWINS™. I am a journalist at heart, once and for always. I so enjoy talking with all of you, being intimately involved once again in your moms-of-multiples community and reading the endearing material you so generously share with us each and every day.

For the first couple of years after we acquired TWINS™ Magazine from its founders nearly 10 years ago, I was intimately involved in the production of TWINS™ and all of the many subjects and issues we write about. After that, the Managing Editor took over making things happen day-to-day, while I oversaw the whole show. Our publishing company recently sold off some newsletters and now we're down to a manageable size again, enabling me to jump back into your exciting world and once again be part of your community, with all of your hopes and aspirations, worries and frustrations, love and joy. This is a gift for me. It's fun and exciting and I love it. Call me, write to me, message me on the TWINS™ Message Board...stay in touch, y'all!

As you'll discover after we get to know each other better in coming months, I feel passionately about many things. Foremost among them is that the greatest gift parents give their children is the gift of literacy. Literate children become leaders, learn to think and analyze, become discerning adults and informed citizens. "Fox" Ellis, a professional storyteller who is part Native American (Cherokee), writes dramatically about how parents can instill a love of reading in their twins by acting out everything they read, bringing tales to life and making each night's read-time a lively experience (see page 22). Diving into holiday storytelling is a great time to put Fox's tips into practice, and to give the gift of literacy.

We should all be passionately grateful for Bernadette and Dave Archibald in Massachusetts and Lonnie Somers in Denver for their fundraising events to further TTTS education (including early diagnosis!), research, and treatment. They are a gift. TWINS Magazine supports their efforts, and is donating \$1 of every new and renewal TWINS subscription to the TTTS cause through Dec. 31, 2005. (See pages 8, 17 and 18.) This deadly condition is unique to the world of twins and I hope we can all get behind the cause and support these efforts every way we can.

Last but not least: Major medical centers are beginning to warn people that if you store foods in plastic bags and plastic containers, NEVER heat your foods in those containers and do not put plastic wrap over foods that you are heating in the microwave. Use glass, ceramic or porcelain dishes, and cover things with a glass plate if necessary. Potentially harmful chemicals in the plastics have been found to leach into your children's and family's foods. Dioxin and phthalates (pronounced *thallets*) primarily, neither of them good. Also, don't freeze your foods in plastic containers; especially important, avoid freezing water, juice, breastmilk or formula in plastic bottles that you subsequently drink from or give to your babies. Same reason. More about this in upcoming issues of TWINS™.


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Is There a Double Bouncy Seat Anywhere?

I just have a quick little question that I hope you can help me with. Is it possible to buy a twin/double bouncy seat anywhere? I can't find it, so maybe you can help me?

Lise Lotte Schmidt

Via email

Editor's Note: We haven't seen any of these. Do any readers know where she can find this item? Email me at twins.editor@businessword.com, please. Put TWINS in your subject line!

Hands-Free Feeding

I am a mother of twins, and I also have a 4-year-old and a 2-year-old. I have been trying to find bottle props and have been unsuccessful. Do you know where I might find them? I would appreciate your help. Thank you.

Sall Weiler

Via email

Editor's Note: TWINS Magazine carries ads for a number of different products....Bottle Tenders at www.BottleTenders.com; Bottle Nanny at www.babydoodads.com; PaciFeeder at www.pacifeeder.com; and The Extra Hand flexible bottle holder at 973-209-0833. Bottle props can come in handy, but be sure not to turn your back on your babies when

they have a bottle propped up for feeding. An interesting new product is the PaciFeeder, because it is designed for upright feeding, which can help prevent ear infections later on. It uses a flexible straw that goes from the bottle to the baby and actually requires a baby to suck in order to get milk or formula. It is a different kind of hands-free bottle feeding system. For all of the products, see our TWINS Shopping Guide, page 42.

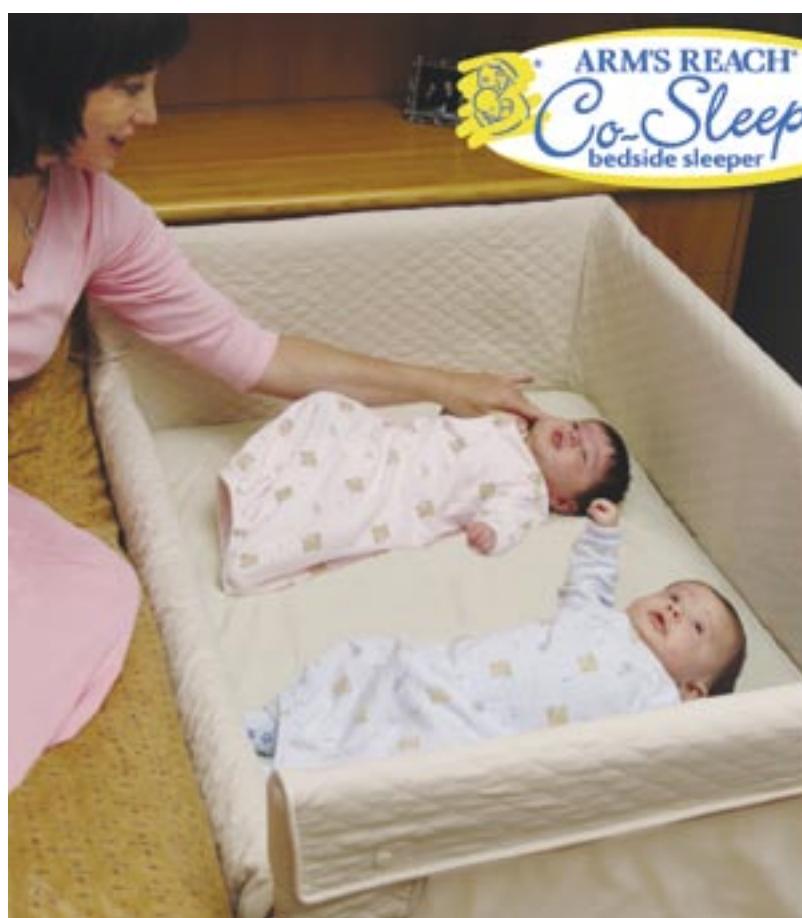
Swedish Producer looking for Separated Twins

A Swedish television production company is producing documentaries for Swedish Channel 3 about twins that have been separated and found each other again.

We are shooting in New York and Los Angeles during the fall and was wondering if you have any kind of tip about twins that would fit the description.

We have heard of the Rabi/Scott-twins in New York and would really like to get in contact with them or another twin-pair who also have a fascinating story to tell. Is there anything you can do to help?

Emilia Eklund, Researcher, Kajak Television
Stockholm, Sweden (emilia.eklund@kajak.se)



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Who am I?

Almost everyone thought that I was someone else. I could understand strangers, relatives and even friends confusing the two of us. But when my own mother mistook me for my identical twin sister, and smacked my bottom for decorating the kitchen with cornflakes, I knew—as young as I was—that it would be a struggle all my life to be an “I” instead of a “we”.

Can you imagine how disappointing it was as a toddler to excitedly race towards the Christmas tree, only to find that my other half had already opened her presents? Mine were almost always duplicates. Or the sadness I experienced when my boyfriend of three years confused the two of us on prom night? I remember pleasantly amused expressions on my parents’ faces as he approached my twin with MY corsage. Those smiles quickly changed to sympathetic frowns once they saw my tormented eyes.

Did someone exist who was exactly like me? Very few people understand what it is like to live as part of a pair, to be scrutinized side by side. After years of trying to assert our independence from each other—to the point of almost annihilating our sisterhood because of the pressures placed on us—my sister and I renewed our friendship, strengthened our bond and embraced our twinhood. It has taken us much of our lives to learn to convey one message: Even though we look alike, we are two separate people who must only fulfill the expectations that we have for ourselves. My twin and I have gone from diapers to diapering our own children. Though our families live several hours away from each other, when we visit it’s as if we are one complete family. The special bond my twin and I share has been passed on to our offspring, and I thank God that my children and I are blessed with this closeness.

Donna Scrima-Black
Monhegan Lake, NY

Don't downplay work of teachers

Thank you for continuing to put out a magazine addressing the concerns of such a special population. I was very disappointed, however, to read the article entitled “Together or Apart: With Homeschooling, it's your choice” (Sept./Oct., 2005).

As a certified early childhood educator who taught for 10 years in public schools before staying home with my twin boys, I was offended and appalled at the lack of substance and research that went into this piece. While I think magazines are a wonderful place for editorials, that is what this article was and it should have been labeled as such.

It is an affront to educators everywhere to have Linda Koenig quoted as saying “...there is no reason for anybody not to homeschool if they want to.” There are (sic) a plethora of things to consider before attempting to homeschool your child, none of which your article even began to explore. The “ABC’s of getting

started” mention some rather important things, like learning your child’s learning style. I didn’t know much at all about learning styles before I took a few courses on it and I’m still learning! Decide on the curriculum is another and there is no explanation of how to do that.

Establishing rules is an enormous task and there are masses of books and articles on how to do it but not a single reference in your article of where to find that kind of information. How about the proven fact that parents have an incredibly difficult time making educational objectives match their expectations for their children (i.e. parents (sic) expectations can be askew from what can actually be achieved)? What about all of the teachers who spend the little money they earn keeping up their certification? Why isn’t continuing education mentioned as an “ABC”? Homeschooling is growing at the rate it is because of all of the misinformation abounding (sic). Yes, people have been successful and yes, I think some people are capable of doing a good job. To present homeschooling as an option for parents who do not want their children separated is completely irresponsible. Parents can talk to their legislators and to the school board. There is no law saying the school’s decision cannot be changed.

I think if parents who want to home school would be required shadow a teacher for even a week, including their meetings, planning sessions and extra course work they are involved in, many would opt not to pursue it. Of course, this is my opinion, just as the author of this article portrayed the opinion of one person.

Deidre Kinoshita, M.A.T.

Stay-at-home mom of Joshua and Seth , 14 months
Via e-mail

Can moms of twins get extended leaves?

I am a TWINS Magazine subscriber and I was wondering if you had information about maternity leaves for mothers of multiples. I am currently gathering information for my current situation and any help/guidance you could provide would be greatly appreciated. My current employer does not have written in our contract anything about extensions of maternity leaves for multiples.

Christine Cooper
Forked River, NJ
Via e-mail

Editor's note: Do any readers out there work for companies that have policies regarding maternity leaves for moms of multiples, particularly for extended leaves? Please e-mail me at twins.editor@businessword.com.

Send Letters to the Editor via e-mail to
twins.editor@businessword.com

Legends live forever...

We recently received an e-mail from a loyal subscriber who wanted us to know about an interesting event we should look into. Attached to the e-mail was a news clipping from a Portland, Oregon, newspaper telling of the birth of triplets in Vancouver, Washington, delivered by a physician who was also a triplet. We did our job and checked it out, with an eye to running a news brief about it in this column. The Fowler triplets were born March 19, 1959, and Dr. Cohen, the triplet who delivered them, passed away a number of years ago. Last we heard, the Fowler triplets were doing well at age 46.

Autism and vaccine immunizations not linked: Newest study

Childhood vaccines have sparked fears among parents that thimerosal, a preservative once used in some vaccines, might trigger autism in young children. Despite several dozen studies that all show there is absolutely no clinical link between childhood vaccines and autism, fears persist. Now Judith Miles, professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri, adds more evidence there is no link between thimerosal and autism in children. Miles studied pregnant women over a 10-year period exposed to thimerosal during gestation; there was no increase in the incidence of autism among babies born to women exposed to thimerosal during pregnancy, even after their children were grown. Parents should not avoid immunizations for their babies and children because of this unfounded immunization scare. Miles's study results were presented at the American College of Medical Genetics annual meeting last summer.

Double your pleasure, double your fun



Wrigley's Doublemint Twins are finalists in the annual "Advertising Walk of Fame" competition sponsored by Advertising Week, which honors the leading ad icons of all time. Wrigley launched its gum campaigns using the Doublemint Twins 50 years ago, and reintroduced the Twins earlier this year in a new series of ads.

Twin takes

Jennifer Loomis, a San Francisco photographer has a growing (in fact, booming) business taking pictures of very large bellies of ladies pregnant with twins. Loomis is a pioneer in her specialized field of pregnancy photography, zeroing in on this niche 12 years ago following a referral from world-famous photographer Annie Liebovitz in New York. She is seeing "a huge jump" in the number of twins she is photographing, especially women pregnant with twins. For more, go to www.jenniferloomis.com.

Proof that environment triggers changes

As identical (MZ) twins grow older, they often develop subtle or not-so-subtle differences in looks, disease patterns or personality traits. Moreover, women MZ twins may differ in fertility or the age they reach menopause. Why is this? A new study indicates that identical twins, despite having identical genetic makeup, actually develop differences in their so-called

epigenomes throughout their lives. The term refers to natural chemical changes that occur to a person's genome (genetic makeup) shortly after conception and hasten or slow the process of a genome's change during a lifetime. Differences in MZ twins' epigenomes emerge as they grow older and become greater the longer they live apart, according to a team of researchers led by Manel Esteller at the Spanish National Cancer Center in Madrid. (Proceedings, National Academy of Sciences, July 5, 2005).

Separation after 10 years

Surgeons in Delhi, India, believe they can successfully separate 10-year-old conjoined twins with a series of seven surgeries that could take as long as a year to complete. Farah and Saba are fused at their brains, so separation involves procedures never before done. Saba has no kidneys, so she would be put on dialysis and later receive a kidney transplant. The entire family will decide whether to embark on this risky venture. Farah and Saba will receive special counseling. ►

Twin mom opens therapy clinic

Eileen deOliveira's twin son, Lucas, has cerebral palsy and thrived during a three-week (60-hour) plan of intensive therapy at a clinic near their home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. When the clinic's owner suddenly closed the facility, deOliveira turned entrepreneur and early this year launched Therapies 4 Kids, Inc., in its place, to deliver intensive pediatric therapies for children with physical disabilities.

She teamed with Steven BiFulco, DPM, who specializes in rehabilitation medicine. The clinic emphasizes natural movements, traditional physical and occupational therapy, and uses several types of advanced exercise equipment. When deOliveira's son, Lucas, began the therapy program at 18 months, he couldn't even crawl due to weakness from right side hemiparesis triggered by a grade-4 brain bleed during his birth prematurely at 27 weeks. By the fourth day of intensive

therapy, Lucas was crawling on his hands and knees. At the end of two weeks, he was walking unassisted as much as seven steps at a time. "Suit Therapy" using a TheraSuit™ coupled with intensive physical therapy were important to his progress. DeOliveira believes this therapy accomplishes in only three or four weeks what seven months or more of traditional therapy often fails to accomplish. (For more information, go to www.therapies4kids.com or call 954-491-6611.)

Twins hit the soap scene



Alex and Addison Hoover



Rachel Pace, Amanda Pace (Photo: JPI Studios 11/4/04 © John Paschal/jpistudios.com)

For you daytime TV junkies, "The Bold and the Beautiful" has two sets of twins starring in the current season. Amanda and Rachel Pace, 5 years old, share the role of Hope Logan. They've handled their stunts well, and recently showed off swimming skills as Hope nearly drowned in a backyard swimming pool and wound up hospitalized in a coma. Addison and Alex Hoover, 15, play Phoebe and Steffy Forrester. They've been featured prominently in the fall series when their mother, Taylor Forrester, returned from the dead. (Major source of teen angst!) Amanda and Rachel Pace began their careers as models in Sprint and K-Mart ads when just a year old. They appeared on "The Young and the Restless" at age 3. They've also been in commercials for Mervyn's and Dell Computers.

Taking off for TTTS



Dr. Julian E. DeLia (right), one of the world's leading TTTS surgeons, from St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Milwaukee, Wisc., celebrates Joey and Eddy Krystowski's flourishing health with their Mom and Dad, who drove up to Conor's Run from their home in Connecticut.

The 5th Annual Conor's Run that took place Sept. 10 in Williamstown, Mass., on the Williams College Campus, drew nearly 400 runners and walkers and raised almost \$14,000 for research, education and treatment of TTTS. Bernadette and Dave Archibald, who lost their dear son Conor to TTTS, had 10 TTTS families participating this year. ♡

Car seat solution



My 18-month-old twins sometimes refuse to get in their car seats. They arch their backs and straighten their legs so I can't get them in. Sometimes they just want to stand in their seats, play with the seat belts and look around the car. Any ideas on how I can put a stop to this?



I have never (and I mean never) written to a magazine or newspaper, and I swear that (I always thought) the publishers just made up the letters to make the editorial seem more real. (I am not complaining, but just could not imagine who has time, especially with twins, to write to a magazine.)

But when I read the question about the twins refusing to get in their car seats, I just had to write, because I used to have such a terrible time with this. I have found a solution that works like a charm for us. The answer is "Kar Kitty," at least that is what we call it. Kar Kitty is a stuffed animal that each of the twins picked out in a store—they were cuddling it and kissing it, so in a moment of weakness I purchased them. Then I had the brilliant idea that these new toys were only and always going to stay in the car.

Now, whenever we are going to get in the car, as we are approaching, we start to say "Let's go see Kar Kitty" or "Do you miss Kar Kitty?" or "Are you ready to see Kar Kitty?" The kids get so excited to see the stuffed animal that they forget to fuss about being buckled in. When it is time to get out we say, "Say bye-bye to Kar Kitty," and "We will keep her safe in the car until we get back." I always tell the kids to "give Kar Kitty a goodbye kiss," and the kids hand her right over. We tuck her into the pocket and are on our way. I know it sounds like a miracle, and it is.

Julie, mom of 20-month-old boy/girl twins
Ethan and Skylar
Via email

For January/February: Send us your thoughts!

My 3-year-old twins strongly resist doing any type of handwashing, even after they've been outside or played with toys belonging to other kids. I feel as if I've tried everything and said everything to help them understand why washing their hands is important. Do you have a method that has worked for you?

E-mail your Family Coach questions to:
twins.editor@businessword.com.
Please type "Family Coach" in the subject line.

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Ask the doctor

Q I have 7 month-old twin girls. They were both born with clefts of the soft palate. I have been unable to obtain any literature or statistics regarding twins with a soft palate cleft exclusively. Our surgeon has stated that he has only seen a few cases where both twins were affected. I am very curious about the occurrence rate of this happening to both twins and was wondering if it could give us a clue to their zygosity, which we are unsure of as they each had their own placentas.

A It appears that there is a mix of genetic and environmental influences on this abnormality, although it seems to happen more often in twins than the general population. Since identical twins in which a cleft develops in BOTH twins happens 40%-60% percent of the time, this suggests that genetics alone do not influence this malformation (otherwise it would be closer to 100%). So, you would not be able to base zygosity (whether they were identical or fraternal) solely on the fact that both have the same abnormality. As an aside, I have identical twins who each had their own placentas, so, as you may know, that doesn't help in determining zygosity, either. Only DNA testing would resolve the issue, or you may be able to get HLA testing done on their blood when they are blood typed for their surgery.

Cleft lip occurs in about 1/1000 live births and cleft palate (where the abnormality is in the roof of the mouth) in 1/2000 live births. They are the most common congenital abnormalities of the head and neck. Cleft lip occurs more commonly in boys than girls (2:1), whereas Cleft palate occurs more commonly in girls than in boys (2:1). Some clefts develop due to teratogens, some due to chance, and some are associated with other syndromes. There are over 200 syndromes that include cleft lip and palate. It has also been shown that both twinning and these types of abnormalities occur more often in families with left-handed parents.

All of these abnormalities should be managed by a multidisciplinary team of surgeons, speech and language specialists, psychologists, genetic counselors, general pediatricians, and audiologists. Surgery can be performed on the lip at 1-4 months

and on the palate at 5-15 months. While this can be stressful for the parents, most children born with these abnormalities have normal intelligence and development and grow up to be normal, active children.

—Rebecca Moskwienski, M.D.

Q I ordered some bottles off Ebay and they came with nipples. I am just curious: Are these safe/sanitary to use if I boil them in water?

Posted on TWINS Message Board

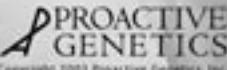
A We always recommend the use of new nipples rather than used ones. It is less a question of sanitation than of the age of the nipple—if a nipple is old, parts of it can break off from the pressure of baby sucking and can choke the baby. If you must use the old nipples, I do recommend sterilizing them in boiling water and checking them each time you use them by pulling firmly on the end to be sure nothing breaks off.

—Rachel Franklin, M.D.

Q I have 11-month-old twin boys and I'm pretty sure they have allergies. They constantly have runny noses and their eyes are always teary. Colin usually gets red cheeks on a bad day. The reason I think it's allergies and not a cold/teething is that I have allergies and on days when I feel bad, they feel/look bad. I talked to my pediatrician and he said they are too young to be tested. I can't give them many over-the-counter remedies because they make the babies hyper. I have tried Benedryl but it doesn't help. Is there any simple test that can be done to see if your child has allergies (pollen, dander, etc.)? Should I make an appointment with a local allergy specialist or listen to my pediatrician?

Posted on TWINS Message Board by Amy

A Your babies have allergies, I'd just almost guarantee it—although I've obviously never met them, so don't just take my word for it. Please do listen to your doctor.



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I reserve allergy testing for those situations in which my patients' lives are threatened by their allergies and must avoid them at all costs (like anaphylactic shock, where if they are exposed their throat closes off and they stop breathing), or in which medicines have failed and I am considering referring them for allergy shots. Otherwise, where we live in Oklahoma, over 60% of us have allergies, so that would be a lot of testing.

The babies would be old enough to try Zyrtec (approved for use in babies as young as 6 months), and some doctors are brave enough to try medicines approved for older children if that doesn't work, although this is not FDA-approved and not recommended for everyone.

And don't forget the old standbys—Vicks Vaporub and Vapo steam (our household favorite), triaminic chest decongestant (ask your doctor for the appropriate dose), humidifiers and mentholated products. All of these help congestion due to allergies. If there are things you can control, like removing carpets, giving away animals, covering bedding with allergy-reducing covers, and so on, that's worth a try, too, and limits the possible side effects due to medicines.

Best of luck—we sniffers here in Oklahoma understand your plight!

—Rachel Franklin, M.D. 

Dr. Rebecca Moskwnski is the mother of monozygotic twins, Bridget and Lindsay, who were born during the second year of her family practice residency. She then had four singleton children—Nick, Ted, Kelsey and Molly. She lives with her children, husband Jerome and a menagerie of four-legged friends in Granger, Ind.



Dr. Moskwnski earned her B.S. degree in biology from Purdue University and her medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine. She specializes in Family Practice and Sports Medicine at Notre Dame, where she is team physician for the university's women's national championship basketball team.

Since 1992, she has served on the board of directors of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs. She currently is president of NOMOTC.

Dr. Rachel Franklin, a board-certified family medicine physician in Oklahoma City, is the mother of 4-year-old twins and the author of *Expecting Twins, Triplets and More: A Doctor's Guide to a Healthy and Happy Multiple Pregnancy* (St. Martin's Griffin 2005), available at www.TwinsMagazine.com. She posts advice on the TWINS Magazine Message Board forums "Pregnant with Multiples?" and "Postpartum." Visit her Web site, www.AskDrRachel.com.



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Perfect Moment

Early on, Julian wasn't fond of cuddling. He was one of those constantly-in-motion babies who never stopped squirming. Later on, as a toddler, he grew to appreciate hugs and kisses and getting cozy on the couch during story time with his cow and doggy toys and his daddy or me, but as an infant, he was too preoccupied with his discoveries of new objects to spend much time snuggling. He was more fond of yanking his sister's hair, turning toys into projectile weapons, biting grown-ups' shoulders after feeding sessions and exploring electrical appliances and cupboards full of fragile glassware.

To try to teach him about empathy and to help him figure out when he was inflicting pain upon his sister, Adrienne, and others, I sometimes pretended to cry after he threw a toy at my head or bit me. When he thought I was crying, he usually gave me a hug. But, in general, when he was a baby between the ages of nine and eighteen months, he didn't always have time for such frivolous displays of affection; he was on the move. He got frustrated when he couldn't get from one place to another by himself, but he was determined to climb up and fall down on his own rather than holding a grown-up's hand for support.

Julian went through one perplexing stage in which he began banging his head against hard wooden objects including walls, floors and headboards. We couldn't figure out why he seemed to enjoy this masochistic activity, but we couldn't convince him to stop. Some friends suggested that we ignore him, but we couldn't. We thought he might give himself a concussion. When we asked his pediatrician about the head-banging episodes, he said, "Just don't put any sharp metal stakes in your floor boards. Kids do a lot of bizarre things. He'll probably outgrow it soon."

Julian did outgrow his noggin-banging habit within a few months, but during the first year, when we, his neophyte parents, were trying to decipher all of our children's behavior, those months felt so long, like decades. Luckily, he soon became passionate about walking, and he seemed to sense that mastering this difficult skill would give him a variety of opportunities that crawling couldn't offer. By standing and holding onto chairs and tables, he discovered our stereo system, with lots of buttons to press and dials to turn. One day he pulled himself high enough to reach a telephone, which became an obsession for several months. He also liked to suck on a musical pacifier that played a quiet version of "Beautiful Dreamer" over and over again, and we could keep track of his whereabouts by listening for the song.

We were relieved that Julian's gastroesophageal reflux, an ailment characterized by a backflow of acid from stomach into the esophagus, didn't slow him down during his first year. Even though he was spitting up 15-20 times a day, as soon as those episodes were over, he eagerly began his next exploration project. We determined that a lot of his restless behavior had to do with the fact that his stomach, esophagus and intestines were working extra hard, so even when he was exhausted and needed to rest, his insides were still churning, and it was hard for him to relax.

I was pretty surprised when I came home one afternoon, after a few hours of power errands, and Julian crawled into my arms, gave me an extra-tight bear hug and flopped his head down on my shoulder.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHUCK GALEY

No squirming. No projectile vomiting. No biting. I hadn't yet resumed my editorial career, so I had no looming reporting deadlines or editing jobs to finish. Our part-time babysitter told me that Julian had already napped, but I guess he was still tired or suffering from a bad case of mommyitis. Adrienne's crib was next to the futon couch in the living room of our crowded two-bedroom apartment, and she was still asleep, so I tiptoed over to the couch. In one fluid motion, Julian and I eased ourselves into a comfortable napping position, and he fell into a deep sleep on my chest. Our sitter waved goodbye and quietly slipped out the door. I synchronized my exhales to Julian's rhythmic inhales. With sleepy Adrienne and Julian there in our living room, the sunlight painting a patchwork pattern across the wall, and only the sounds of their heavy baby breaths, I couldn't have imagined a more peaceful or perfect late afternoon. ♪

7 Myths about Fevers

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

MYTH #1: Fevers cause brain damage

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

MYTH #2: Fever seizures are harmful

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

MYTH #3: All fevers need to be treated

Fever does not have to be treated. Why? Because treating the fever will not help combat the underlying disease process. However, because fevers above 102° F can sometimes cause discomfort, it is reasonable to treat these fevers with acetaminophen or ibuprofen liquid.

A few words of caution: It is not necessary to soak or sponge your child with cold-water baths—this only reduces the fever for a few minutes. And never use rubbing alcohol to cool your feverish child. Alcohol is toxic to infants, and will be absorbed through the skin.

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

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



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

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

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

This can be a dangerous myth. A child can be quite ill, with a serious infection like pneumonia or meningitis, and yet have a low-grade fever or no fever at all. Conversely, benign viral infections, that do no harm, can cause high fevers that are unresponsive to fever-lowering medicines.

How your child appears (does he look sick?) is far more important than how high his fever may be.

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

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

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

Steven Sainsbury lives in San Luis Obispo, Calif., and is the father of eight in a blended family, including three surviving quads, now 21 years old. He's been writing medical articles for TWINS since 1986, and has worked as a full-time emergency physician since 1985.

The Santa-Catchers

Christopher said he was going to catch Santa Claus. Randy offered to help, so my twins put their mischievous minds together and devised a plan.

The Santa trap seemed an unlikely scheme, given that my twins were terrified of the Jolly Old Fellow. One year earlier, when Santa visited preschool, Randy's and Christopher's classmates fought and clawed to be first on Santa's lap, but my twins stood in the back of the room white-knuckling the art table. One by one the other children stepped forward to recite their Christmas wish lists and Santa rewarded each with a candy cane.

Eventually, Randy was overcome by the smell of peppermint. Sighing deeply, he began his cautious trek toward the gray-haired man in the floppy hat. Twice he paused to look over his shoulder, as if expecting an ambush—a renegade elf or low flying reindeer. Within reach of one fuzzy red knee, Randy held out a trembling hand. Santa chuckled a hearty "Ho-ho," and handed the boy his treat. Faster than Santa can spring up a chimney, Randy turned and ran to the safety of his brother and me in the rear of the classroom.

"Christopher, you have to go up there!" Randy told his twin.

"I don't want to," Christopher insisted.

"Don't you want a candy cane?"

Christopher nodded that he did.

"Then go up there."

"I can't," Christopher insisted with tears.

Randy sighed. "Okay, Christopher, I'll go up there and pretend to be you."

He pushed his own candy cane into Christopher's hand then repeated his first performance.

One year later, it was Christopher who masterminded the plot to outsmart Santa.

"Mom, can we sleep next to the Christmas tree?"

My response was a very practical, "No."

"Ah, mom!" they groaned in stereo. Minutes later, they were dragging their bedding into the family room, assuring me, "Dad said we could."

Next they arranged their bedding with a trap to trip Saint Nick. Christopher spread his blankets to conceal a toy, which might cause a large person to stumble. Then the boys placed a plate of cookies and a glass of milk near the fireplace so Santa would have to cross the blankets to get to the cookies.

"In case Santa comes in the front door, I put a note for him to come downstairs and look for his cookies," Christopher explained.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY PETERSON

"Sounds like you have all your bases covered!" I laughed.

As we tucked the boys in bed for the night, Christopher whispered to his dad, "I'm going to sleep with one eye open just to be sure I catch him!"

"You do that," dad agreed.

Just when we thought the kids were asleep, down in the family room there arose such a clatter, we sprang from our bed to see what was the matter. When what to our tired eyes should appear, but 3-year-old Andrew standing in the middle of Christopher's Santa-trap.

"Andrew, what are you doing up?"

"I wanted to sleep with Randy and Christopher!"

"He messed up my trap!" Christopher hollered.

"I'm trying to sleep," Randy moaned.

"They said Santa will step on me," Andrew wailed.

"Everyone back to bed!" dad demanded.

When I awoke the next morning, I almost expected to find a bound and gagged Mr. Claus hunkered beneath the stockings with two kindergartners chanting and doing a victory dance. Instead, I awoke to three small voices singing out, "It's Christmas!"

As we cuddled together to read the Christmas story, Christopher tugged on my sleeve. I thought he wanted to explain what went wrong with his Santa-trap. "Mom," Christopher whispered, "when can I give Randy the present I got him?"

My twins said little about Santa Claus that day—he no longer seemed to matter. They exchanged gifts with their siblings and wallowed in the fun and laughter of family togetherness. My little Santa-catchers may not have caught Santa Claus, but they did catch something else: the joy of giving, and the true meaning of Christmas. ♡

Jennifer Dahlen lives in Portland, Ore., with her husband and their family of seven children, including 8-year-old twin boys.

Mom's First Year— Baths with Babies



My boy/girl twins are 5 months old. I love to take a bath with them, one at a time, of course. (One waits by the tub in a bouncy seat.) It relaxes all of us. Is this sanitary? Is it safe for them? What about bubble bath? It seems like the best way to be sure I find the time to get cleaned up every few days.



Don't we all know what a blessing it is to find two seconds in the day just to pull our greasy hair out of our faces while trying to care for newborn multiples! A shared bath can be the best time in a busy week for a harried mother and her irritable babies, and a wonderful opportunity for bonding. Warm water, a calming scented candle and even soft music add ambience for infants as well as parents—babies respond best to touch, smell and sound in the first few months of life, and such a routine can soothe and relax a baby before bedtime.

While it is true that your germs come into contact with your babies' skin during a communal bath, remember that the babies are exposed to the same germs through your household items, toys, bed linens, your skin (yes, even after hand washing!) and everything else in the house. Exposure to their parents' germs is one way babies develop healthy immune systems. Their intestines need exposure to certain germs in order to mature and digest food properly. Indeed, one theory behind why we have so many children with allergy and asthma problems these days is that we have made their early lives too germ-free.

I do not recommend you bathe with your babies if you are ill, especially if you have intestinal symptoms like vomiting or diarrhea; those are not the kinds of germs you want to have mingling in your babies' bath water. I also recommend against bubble bath and bath oils—the fragrances they contain often irritate babies' delicate skin. When you bathe with one while leaving the other in the bouncy, please be sure you can easily reach both for safety's sake and that the one that has just left the tub is fully dried and warm again.

But by all means do it if it gives you pleasure in parenthood. You will probably later recount to your children that this was one of the moments that made being a parent so special—don't forget it and don't give it up yet! ♦



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A New Heart for Papa

For over a year and a half, my father waited patiently for a much-needed heart transplant. His faith was unwavering while he waited for a donor. He continually prayed about his possible donor and for his donor and his/her family.

On Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2001, at 8:30 a.m. my father received the call he'd been waiting for; the transplant center had a new heart for him. On their way to the hospital, my parents called my brothers, sisters and me and we all began the trek to be with Dad before surgery. My husband and I drove feverishly to the hospital, discussing when, how or if we should announce our news to Dad on this miraculous day.

After being married almost 13 years and battling infertility more than seven years, we were finally pregnant and were going to be doubly blessed with twins. We wanted to share our news and shout it from the housetops, but were nervous about telling anyone until after our first trimester.

On the day of Dad's surgery, we weren't quite through our first trimester and hesitated to share our news. After much debate, we decided we had to tell Dad so he had something special to live for.

My husband would have the honor of telling Dad whenever he could. My whole family and several close friends were at Dad's bedside before surgery. We gathered around Dad's bed and prayed, holding hands, with the hospital chaplain leading us.

My husband thought he'd break the news then but the group broke up, nurses came and went, family members came and went and our moment was lost.

A while later, many of our group had dispersed and only a few family members were scattered about the room. The chaplain came in for some last words with my Dad. He asked Dad how many grandchildren he had. Dad responded he had six—three girls and three boys. The chaplain told him he was lucky to have so many people praying for him, and Dad agreed. As the chaplain left, Jorge took my Dad's hand and said "Bob, actually you have eight grandchildren. Julie and I are expecting twins in April and we want you to baptize them in the spring." Dad whispered that he'd "be there with bells on."

To our surprise, no one but my sister Mari heard our news. Our next dilemma was when to tell the rest of the family.

The day was long and emotional while we waited through surgery and continuously updated people who couldn't be with us. We spent the day and a good part of the night in the surgical intensive care family room, located just a short way down the hall from the newborn infant nursery. I peeked in and much to my surprise, there was a set of newborn twins in the window.



(l. to r.) Carol DeFiore, Julie, twins Bennett and Olivia, Jorge and Bob DeFiore.

I told Jorge this was where we should share our news. He agreed, knowing that he could easily get my Mom, sisters and aunts to peek in the baby nursery. At some point, various family members made their way to the nursery and were gawking at the babies. Jorge came up to them and said, "Those babies are cute but wait until you see our twins in April." No one paid much attention at first. Then my Mom and aunt realized what he'd said and asked him to repeat it. He announced we were pregnant with twins due in April. The quiet somberness of the day ended there.

We told Mom that Dad knew about the twins before he went into surgery. She thought it unlikely he'd remember the news after being under anesthesia. We would see.

At 1 a.m., after a very long day, surgery was done. Dad had done well and was in recovery. Later that day, when Dad was awake, Mom asked if he remembered what Jorge had told him. He nodded yes. We were thrilled to know our joyful news helped Dad pull through the biggest surgery of his life!

Dad later shared with everyone his story of learning about our twins on the day he got his new heart—doctors, nurses, transplant team members, other patients and anyone who would listen. He was already smitten with these two special babies.

On April 8, 2002, almost six months to the day following Dad's heart transplant, we were doubly blessed with the safe and healthy arrival of Bennett Luis and Olivia Pilar. Our dreams came true and my Dad's two newest reasons for living were now here with us.

All of Dad's grandchildren are very special to him. But Bennett and Olivia are the first grandchildren of his second chance at life. Bennett and Olivia are now 3 and Dad celebrated the fourth anniversary of his heart transplant in October. ♡

Julie Arza lives in Crystal Lake, Ill. She is happy staying at home with her twins.



2005 Twin-to-Twin Transfusion (TTTS) Ambassador Family

The Colwell family lives in Colorado Springs and has struggled with the devastating effects of TTTS for three years. Their babies, Evan and Wyatt, survived TTTS but still experience the debilitating effects of the condition. For many children, like Evan and Wyatt, the battle does not end at birth, even if they survive.

There is another side to TTTS, the one seldom discussed, the one that puts the lives of TTTS children in danger every single day of their existence.

The TTTS Race for Hope's Ambassador Family for 2005 demonstrates why TTTS families especially appreciate each minute they spend with their children, because it might be the last minute they have.

Evan's and Wyatt's Story

The Colwells' twin boys were diagnosed with TTTS at 26 weeks. Cindy was hospitalized the same day and had three amnio drains inserted to remove fluid from around Evan, the "receiver" fetus. Wyatt, the "donor", had so little amniotic fluid around him, he could barely be seen on ultrasound.

After a week in the hospital Wyatt's heart rate dropped. Cindy was prepared for delivery. Doctors decided to "not do anything to save that baby because he most likely had brain damage." Cindy and her husband Darrell questioned this, spoke to a neonatologist, and decided to wait and see. Wyatt's heart rate swung between normal and extremely low, and Cindy received steroids for the babies' lung development. They were delivered in October, 2002. Evan was 2 lbs. 1 oz.; Wyatt was 1 lb. 7 oz.

After a few days on a ventilator, Wyatt came off oxygen but he was weak and became ill with a staph infection. He showed signs of PVL, which is damage to the brain caused by lack of blood flow to the brain. Though Wyatt showed no signs of developmental problems when

taken home from NICU at two months, he had reflux and was very cranky. At four months, Wyatt was diagnosed with extreme microcephaly (small head and brain). At six months, Wyatt's reflux became worse, he had surgery to stop vomiting and he was given a g-tube for feedings. At 19 months, he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, corneal blindness, a seizure disorder and was fed almost entirely through his g-tube. Wyatt did poorly after another surgery. He was unable to control the muscles in his airway properly. He didn't move much and he didn't talk.

Evan was diagnosed with a condition known as NEC at 3 days, had surgery to remove a portion of his small intestine and was given an ileostomy. The Colwells learned this was a direct result of TTTS. His blood had become too thick in utero to get to all his bowels. His head ultrasound showed no real problems. Evan went home the same day as his brother at 2 months but returned to have the ileostomy reversed 2½ weeks later. He began to swell immediately and showed signs of intestinal malfunction. Evan had another ileostomy a month later, followed by malabsorption problems and dehydration. He spent nearly three months in the hospital 1.5 hours from his parents' home. At six months, the surgeons decided their only option was to reverse the ileostomy again and "see what happens". Evan has done wonderfully since then, except for a lot of colds and ear infections. It has been a year since Evan's last surgery and he is walking, running, talking, laughing, and keeping his parents and sister laughing and running.

Evan and Wyatt Today

Evan is doing well and is very active. He developed asthma and has some problems with being a bit underweight. He is every bit the showoff. He started preschool and will receive further speech therapy there. He is a child full of life.

Wyatt has many support devices, thanks to Medicaid. His prognosis has

been terminal for some time now, but the doctors continue to be amazed he has overcome many bouts of close calls. He has difficulty breathing when asleep. The Colwells get up many times every night to ensure Wyatt is inhaling enough oxygen. He has begun to eat some baby foods, but still relies on g-tube feedings five times a day. But he loves mini-M&M's. Wyatt also has experienced so-called startle seizures for some time.

"TTTS is one of the cruellest things I can even imagine, much less live with," says Cindy. "We love our boys very much along with their 7-year-old sister. We cannot believe we have kept our sanity through all this."

TTTS Race for Hope

The TTTS Race for Hope is a 5k run/walk held in Denver, Colorado on November 13, 2005, along with the TTTS Race for Hope National Pledge Drive. Its mission is to raise awareness and raise funds for those that are saving our precious babies' lives. In 2006, the TTTS Race for Hope will expand nationally with events planned in Denver, Orlando, Charlotte, and San Diego. Consider helping by participating in the National Pledge Drive, supporting TTTS and other fetal distresses by purchasing a red "TWIN HOPE" silicone support bracelet and/or purchasing a baby themed Italian charm specially designed for the TTTS Race for Hope. Make a tax deductible donation at www.ttsraceforhope.org (See form, page 17.)

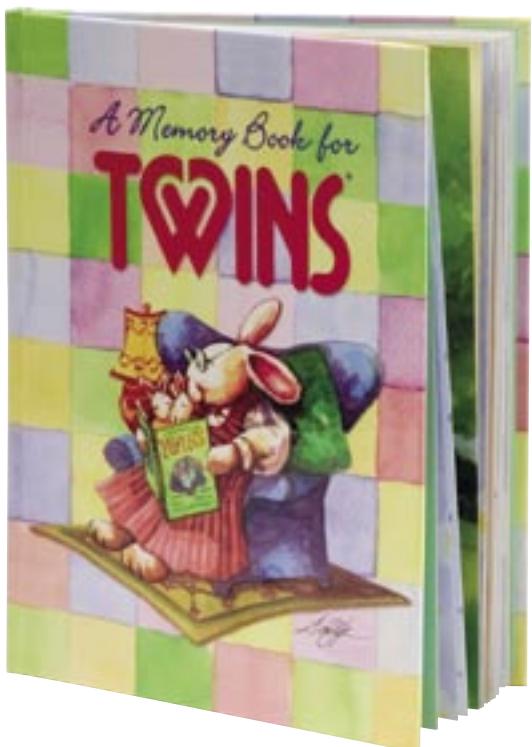
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TTTS is a syndrome that affects identical twins and higher order multiples during pregnancy. Every year, an estimated 8,500 babies are affected by TTTS. Over 65% lose their battle.



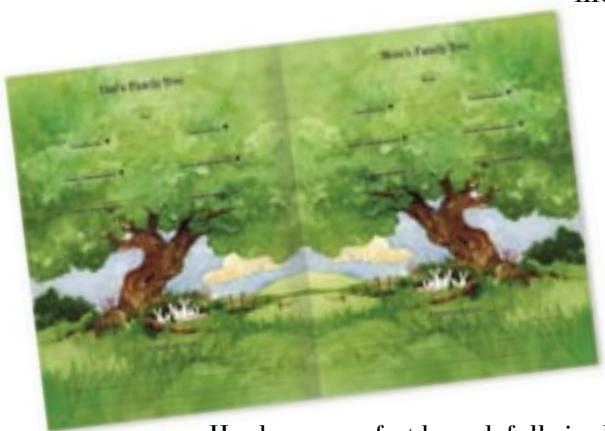
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TWIN TAKES

from the horse's mouth

■ by Jennifer Jordan

PARENTS ALWAYS ASK:

We are advised by the experts to be "fair" with our twin children, but not

to attempt to be "equal" in all aspects of life with them. That's always a tough thing to keep in mind. What is your perspective on the subject of fairness vs. equality when raising twins?

JENNIFER'S TAKE: Thinking the two words were synonymous, my parents were very concerned with treating my twin sister and me fairly and equally. Behaving as if a secret Social Services sect dedicated to the "Equality of Twins" was watching them, they wanted to treat us the same on all fronts. We soon realized that this was a huge deal to them and we used it to our advantage; we learned that uttering the phrase, "That's not fair!" was sure to get their attention quicker than a letter from the IRS.

My sister was physically more mature than me: when she was crawling, I was still scooting, and when she was walking, I was still crawling. This didn't become much of a "fairness" factor until we were four and started to ride bikes. Because she was more advanced, she was able to get rid of training wheels at a quicker rate than me. But, once she got rid of hers, I was determined to get rid of mine and I begged my parents to remove them. They weren't sure I was ready, but they wanted to be "fair" and so, the training wheels were taken off and I was allowed to ride my bike. And, ride it I did! Right into the front yard, crashed into a bush, knocked down the mailbox and split open my lip. At that point my parents realized they couldn't treat us as complete equals because we had different abilities; they would have to find another way to be fair. And so, the training wheels were put back on.

I initially thought this was unfair and I tried the "That's not fair!" approach that had worked so well in the past. But, my parents explained, my sister was able to ride without training wheels while I was not yet able. Then they did the fairest and best thing a parent can do for their twin: they encouraged me to find a different activity at which I could excel.

While my sister was out riding her bike, I—in between secret pleas that she would crash—learned I could draw. After showing my sister a picture of a dog I had drawn, and laughing at her failed attempt to draw the same picture, I was content to find that while she could do something I could not, I could do something she could not. Neither of us cared that we couldn't do the same thing: all we cared about was that we were both better at something than the other. To both of us, that was fair.

While treating us fairly never backfired, there were times when treating my sister and me as equals often became unfair in itself. For instance, my twin and I had

to share a room when we were growing up while our younger (yes, younger!) sister was given her own room. When we asked why we had to share a room, my parents simply said, "Because you are twins and we want everything to be equal." Yet, my twin and I didn't see it as being equal, we saw it as if we were being punished merely because we were twins.

In a nutshell, I would recommend that parents of twins try to be fair in the aspect of encouraging both twins to pursue things they are each good at (which are unlikely to be the same things) but not to attempt to treat twins as equals. Even the most identical of twins will not be completely equal. In areas where twins are equal—for instance, if both twins are capable of staying overnight at a friend's house—then by all means, the fair thing to do is treat them equally. But, for the most part, equality is irrelevant; even though they are twins, they are two separate, often very different people and want to be treated as such. (But this doesn't mean they won't try to use the "That's not fair!" squeals to their advantage, and to befuddle you.)

My sister and I agree that overzealous attempts at equality while growing up was annoying and frustrating. It placed us in competition with each other, took away some of our individuality and made us feel like a pair, instead of single entities. It also took the fact that we were twins and shoved it down our throats. To us, being twins was normal, and that was how we wanted to be treated.

Ultimately, parents of twins need not be so concerned with treating twins equally and should, instead, be concerned with treating them as individuals, while encouraging them and parenting them based on each twin's individual needs and abilities. That, from the twins' point of view, will breed fairness.

My sister and I now know we are not equals and



Double Takes Twins Annie and Sara, 2 years, often want to be doing the same things at the same time.

never will be. But like all brothers and sisters, we still have typical bouts of sibling rivalry even to this day. Hence, I would like to point out that she still can't draw, but I can ride a bike without training wheels. Most of the time, anyway.

PARENTS ALWAYS ASK: One of my kids is always saying that I discipline her more than I do her sister. That may be true, because one of the girls is definitely more aggressive and mischievous than her twin sister, who is quieter and more passive and seldom gets into any trouble. But I worry about the consequences of having to discipline one a lot more than the other. What's your take on this?

JENNIFER'S TAKE: This, if you will pardon the pun, is practically "identical" to the situation my parents were in when my sister and I were young, with me naturally being the better-behaved child. While I wasn't a perfect angel, by any means, I was much more subtle about misbehaving than my sister; my sister would misbehave from the highest mountaintops for all to see and hear.

Because of this, my sister should have been disciplined much more often than I ever was, and perhaps even sold at a garage sale. However, my parents too were worried about the consequences of disciplining one twin more than the other.

Keeping with the idea that they should discipline us both equally, my parents often only disciplined us when they could discipline both of us. Thus, it seemed that the only times my sister was ever punished were when she took me down with her.

Consequently, I rarely misbehaved by myself; I was usually aided and abetted, possibly even framed, by my twin sister. So, when I did misbehave, because my sister was misbehaving too, my parents were quick to discipline us. This left me feeling as if I was punished every time I misbehaved, while my sister was only punished about half the time she misbehaved. Ultimately, I felt as though there was no reward for being the better-behaved twin; I was more obedient but we both were equally punished. This method also placed in my sister's head the idea that she should

get her way at all times.

The desire to discipline us both equally, over time, evolved into my parents getting mad at both twins for things that only one twin did wrong. For instance, once my twin sister called my mom at work and yelled at her for not buying her any new clothes. My mom came home livid and instead of getting mad at just my sister, she was also mad at me. Though I had nothing to do with my sister's phone call (I was undoubtedly out saving an elderly person from a burning building, or volunteering at the homeless shelter), I was convicted merely on the basis of DNA.

This ideology of my parents—the "don't discipline one if you can't discipline both" notion—went on for years in my house and led both my sister and me to adopt the phrase "we aren't the same person" as our own personal mantras.

From a twin's point of view, I always thought it was unfair that we had to be disciplined equally when our behavior wasn't at all congruent. Thus, the advice I would offer a parent who has twins is to provide discipline where it is warranted: If one twin misbehaves more frequently than the other, then that child should be disciplined more often. If she isn't, the more mischievous twin may learn that she can get away with everything while the better-behaved twin may feel slighted for not ever getting away with anything. Ultimately, in this situation, parents should treat their twins not as if they are twins but as if they are merely siblings. If they weren't twins, didn't look alike, or weren't the same age, then parents would probably have no qualms about disciplining one more than the other when the punishment is deserved. This concept needs to be applied to twins as well: they may be twins, but they aren't the same person (my sister and I are presently putting that motto on our family crest), and they should never be treated, nor disciplined, as if they were the same person.

From a twin's point of view, the amount of discipline a twin receives, like everything else, should be determined solely on an individual basis. ♡

Jennifer is 27 and lives in Aurora, Colo. Her twin Kimberly, is moving back to Aurora from Portland, Ore., early next year.

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Raising Twin Readers: From the ABCs to Shakespeare

Avigdor and Avika, 2 Years

by Brian "Fox" Ellis

While your twins were still in the womb, only six months old, their ears were listening intently. The parts of their brains geared for language were well formed. As a reading teacher and professional storyteller I knew this fact intellectually, but I was curious about the language development of my twin daughters.

While my wife was still carrying our twins, I began to sing a lullaby to them every night. On the night they were born, after I helped the nurses wash and weigh my twin angels, as soon as the chaos settled, I held both of my twins while my wife slept. I began singing my daughters that same lullaby. They both instantly perked up and looked at me as if to say, "Hey, I know that song! I know that voice!"

It was two days before Christmas and even the mouse was asleep, so I spent half the night singing Christmas Carols to the most appreciative audience I have ever had.

It is never too early to sing, read aloud or tell stories to your twins!

0-2 Years

When your twins are newborns, admittedly, they may not sit still for Shakespeare or even all of *Good Night Moon*. But it is important that you read aloud to them. Lap time is vital. They learn that a book is a warm excuse for cuddling with their parents and giggling.

Brain research affirms what linguists have long known: In these first few years babies' brains are still growing. This growth is linked to language acquisition. They learn the sounds and rhythms of speech. Infants may not respond with whole words, but their brains are hard wired for language. Reading to them, singing to them and playing rhythmic games with their toes will help them learn language skills.

When my girls were small we did not really read the book; we talked about the pictures, I told a brief version of the story and we made funny animal sounds. I would ask questions about the pictures and we made up stories. It was a time to share.

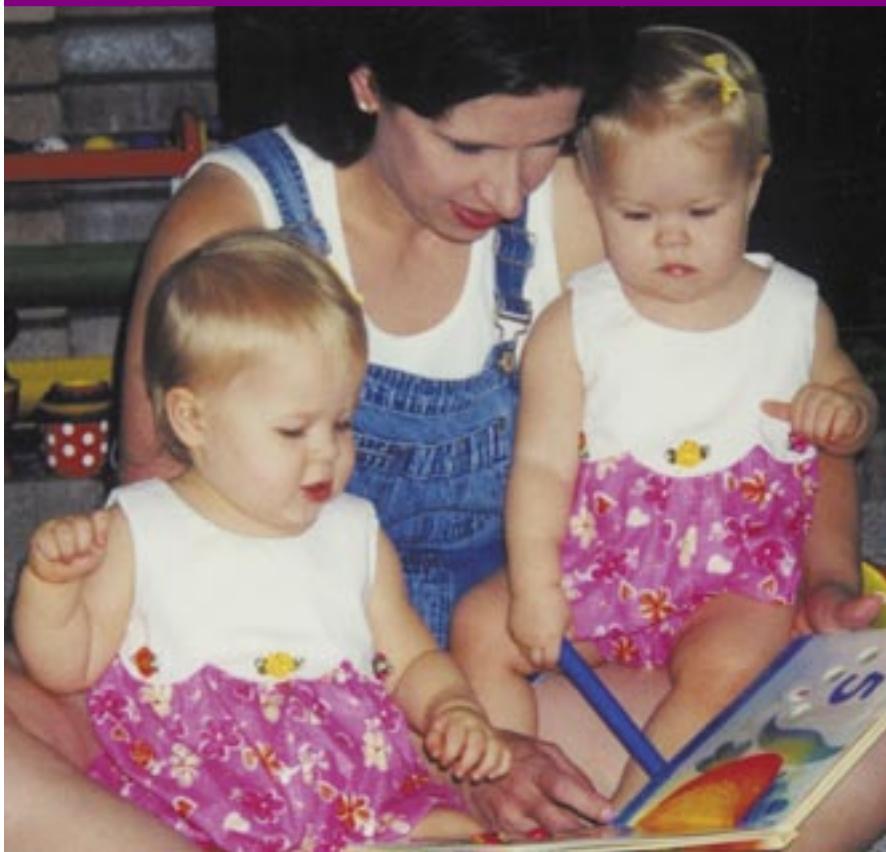
The emphasis was on fun. They were also learning that books go left to right, these black marks make words, and words carry meaning, and stories have a beginning, middle and end. They were learning what scholars call reading readiness skills. It did not matter that we did not always get through the entire book. They were learning that books can bring great joy.

At this stage it is important that they be given plenty of cloth and vinyl books for them to play with and chew. Cardboard books in the toy box imply that books are toys, but are not as good as soft books for babies. My girls also liked textured books with fuzzy pictures and things to touch.

When babies are ready they will sit still for an entire story.

2-5 Years

Between the ages of 2 and 5 children can learn as many as 2,000 words a year. That is an average of five to six new words each and every day. Aware of this fact, I was always intrigued when a word I read to my



Elsie and Emily, 21 Months

twin daughters was used in their conversation within a few hours.

But if you do not read to them on a daily basis this will not happen. Any reading teacher can pick out which kids were read to and which were not. The greatest gift we can give our children is the gift of literacy.

More than simply reading the story in a droll voice, storytellers must feel free to sing, add accents, make sound effects, create the dramatic moment. If it feels like school, reading becomes a chore. Ask open-ended questions during and after reading the book. Share your opinions about the story and ask for their response to the text and pictures. Encourage thoughtful reading.

My two-year-old girls loved to 'read' to me. They would crawl into my lap and open a book, turn the pages and make up a story mimicking some of the sound effects and big voices I used. Though they were not technically reading, they were proud of this effort and exhibited all of the skills

needed to become good readers.

We also loved wordless picture books. We looked at the pictures and made up a different story every time. They especially liked finger play and story songs. The Itsy-Bitsy Spider and The Alphabet Song were favorites.

Bedtime and nap time stories are a great daily ritual that help twins relax and get to sleep, but don't stop there. Rowdy stories and acting out the adventure can bring literature to life. Creating silly plays with dress-up clothes and original songs stimulates more reading while laying a foundation for creative writing. Original puppet show productions allow your twins to work together to interpret the text of a classic story.

Beyond the book, at this stage it is important that children have diverse real life experience. (My favorite mantra about computer games: Reality is always better than virtual reality!) If your twins have been to the zoo, flown a kite, ridden a train, climbed a tree, been to the theatre

More than simply reading the story in a droll voice, storytellers must feel free to sing, add accents, make sound effects, create the dramatic moment.

and tasted cotton candy at the fair, these experiences will in turn inform what they read. New flavors and textures, new experiences strengthen vocabulary and prepare your children for creating their own stories.

As an extreme example, our family went to Costa Rica on vacation when our twins were five. More than vocabulary enhancement, an experience like this gives your twins a rich resource to draw on for the rest of their lives. Now, when we read a story about monkeys, one my daughters will interrupt and tell her story about a wild spider monkey that crawled down from the tree, across her shoulder and stole a piece of papaya she was about to put in her mouth. We also kept a journal, I with poetry and they with pictures. On the plane trip down and back they would draw a series of pictures and I would write down their words. This evolved into a young authors' project for their kindergarten class when we returned.

A holiday trip to grandma's house is

the perfect excuse for this kind of picture writing. These pictures can be copied and sent to grandma as a thank-you card.

6-10 Years and Beyond

A growing body of research affirms one fact: Kids who love to read are kids who were read to when they were young. But you are never too old to read aloud or be read to. As my daughters' attention spans grew, we chose longer books. We read more than 50 of *The Box Car Children* out loud. As they got older they took turns reading. Recently we read the sixth Harry Potter novel aloud as a family.

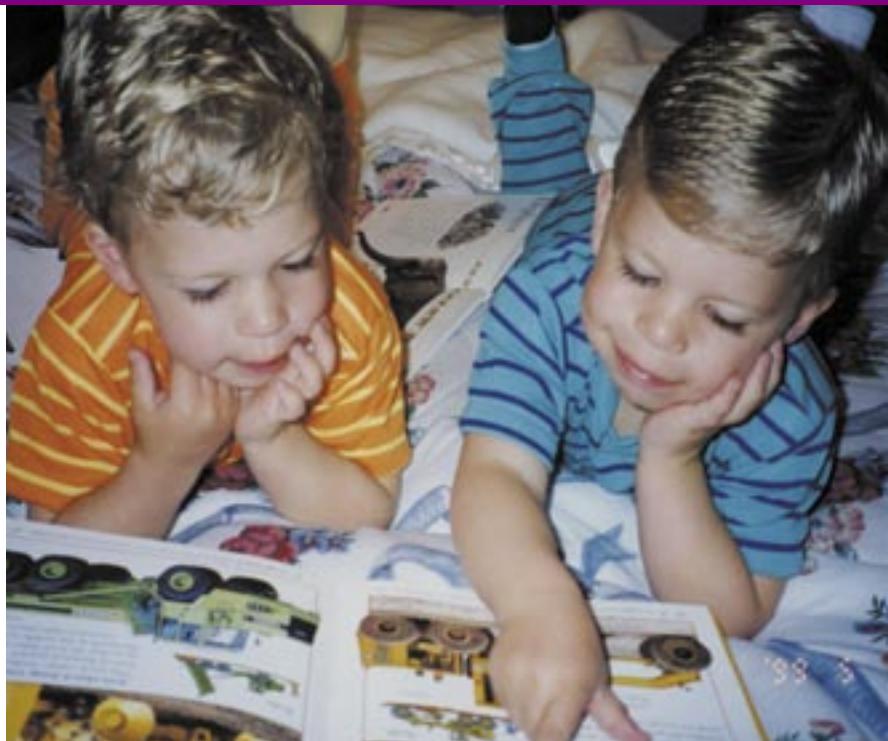
Research also says children understand and learn from listening to a story two or three years or grade levels above their reading level. At the same time, improved listening leads directly to improved reading. If a child has never heard a word, it is not in their sight vocabulary. My wife and I still read poetry and newspaper articles aloud to each other, modeling our love of language.

More important than reading aloud to your twins is that they see you reading. Action speak louder than words. When you and your spouse practice what you preach, you model that reading is fun and important... and they get it. Reading is a lifelong habit and the earlier you start, the better.

The Reluctant Reader

When I hear a teacher or parent ask a child: "Do you like to read?" I always correct them. That is not the right question! It should be "What do you like to read?" or better yet, "What do you like to do? Read about that!"

One of my daughters will read a novel a day during the summer. Frequent trips to the library are not frequent enough. Our other daughter is not as eager to spend long days wrapped in the world of fiction.



Christopher and Alexander, 2½ Years

Between the ages of 2 and 5, children can learn as many as 2,000 words a year.

She loves snakes. She has a small non-fiction library on snake care and the natural history of reptiles. She also loves country music and would rather listen to CDs on her headphones than read. We bought her a subscription to a music magazine. Now she devours it cover to cover within a few days of its arrival. And because we value one-on-one time with our twins, I will occasionally choose a book that interests her and just the two of us will take turns reading it aloud.

Even with identical twins, kids become ready to read at their own pace. Encourage both twins to read. Read to them and with them as a lifelong habit. Read together and individually to your twins.

Give them the time and encouragement to develop at their own pace. If the differences in how well they read or what they like to read are made into an issue, then it becomes a more difficult struggle, especially for parents of twins. As twins grow older they look for ways to differentiate from their sibling. It would be easy to

push them apart and inadvertently create the false idea that one is a reader and the other is not.

With our twins we know that one loves novels and the other loves non-fiction, though honestly, we encourage them both to read broadly. And knowing that my teenage daughters proofread these articles, (both have published articles of their own!), I will give my wife and myself a pat on the back: These ideas have worked for us. From learning the alphabet song to appearing in school plays, our twins both share our love for literature and language. ♡

Brian "Fox" Ellis is a professional storyteller, curriculum consultant and author of the new children's picture book *THE WEB* at *Dragonfly Pond* (DAWN Publications, 2005). He is father to Laurel and Lily, now adolescents. www.foxtalesint.com

From reading to telling your own story:

A holiday trip to visit family is a great excuse for creating your own stories:

Similar to our "Postcards from Costa Rica," encourage your twins to draw pictures of their trip to visit the relatives. You can write down their comments and create mini-poems. Scan these and print them on card stock to mail to your relatives after the visit.

Spending time with relatives is also a great excuse for collecting family stories. Using old family photos as a springboard, take turns telling stories about the people and places in the pictures. This is also a great excuse for lap time with grandma!

Ask your parents or grandparents what children's songs, stories or finger plays were their favorites when they were young. Encourage them to teach these simple poems and rhythms to your twins.

What are your family's unique holiday traditions, recipes and customs? Create a scrapbook that combines photos, short written memories, and your twins' art work.

Break out the old song books and sing your favorite carols!

Some of our favorite holiday stories:

The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg, (Houghton Mifflin 1985). More than a good movie, this is a fantastic picture book where the illustrations and text blend beautifully to create the ultimate Christmas fantasy!

Christmas Day in the Morning by Pearl S. Buck, illustrated by Mark Buehner (Harper Collins 2002). A longtime favorite story written in 1955, we were thrilled when it was published as a picture book that celebrates the true spirit of gift giving.

Baboushka and the Three Kings by Ruth Robbins, illustrated by Nicolas Sidjakov (Parnassus Press 1960). This Caldecott Award-winning book is a sweet story of an old hag who has a change of heart after meeting the three kings on their way to Bethlehem. Best served with cookies!

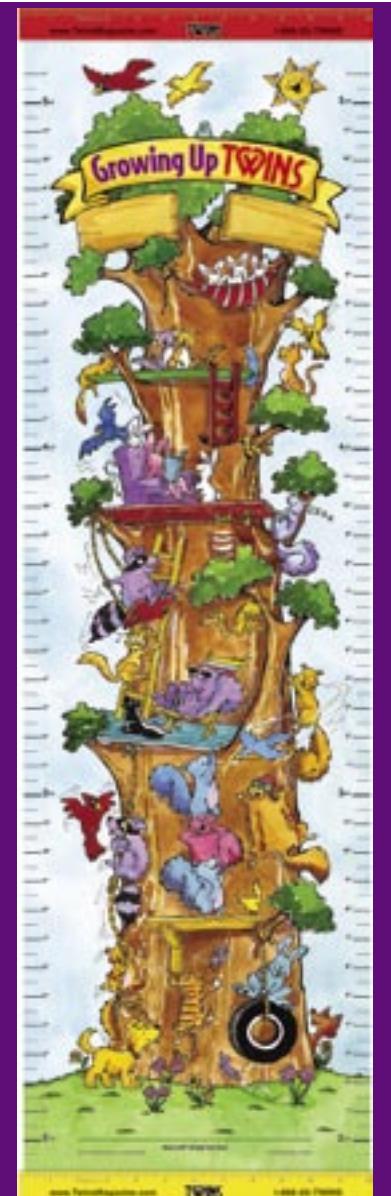
The Nutcracker by Vladimir Vagin (Scholastic 1995). Since many of our children will perform in or at least go see this classic holiday ballet, it is great fun to read a child's version of this traditional folktale.

Diane Goode's American Christmas illustrated by Diane Goode (Scholastic 1990). A wonderful collection of folktales, carols and poems edited and illustrated by, you guessed it, Diane Goode. Every year there are similar anthologies of stories and songs, many worth owning, but this is by far our favorite.

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins by Eric Kimmel, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Holiday House 1985). This traditional Jewish folktale is given new life through Kimmel's retelling and Hyman's elaborate illustrations. Both scary and funny, it is sure to delight both the children and the adult reading to them!

A Story, A Story by Gail Haley (Alladin Paperbacks, Simon & Schuster 1970). I have yet to find a satisfying children's story about Kwanza, the African-American holiday created to help connect black Americans to their African roots. So go straight to the root and read this classic, Caldecott-winning African folktale about Ananse the Spider!

How Chipmunk Got His Stripes by Joseph and James Bruchac, illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey (Dial Books 2001). In our family we honor all holidays (any excuse for a celebration!), so the winter solstice or longest night is a great time to curl up with bear and chipmunk in this Iroquois folktale.



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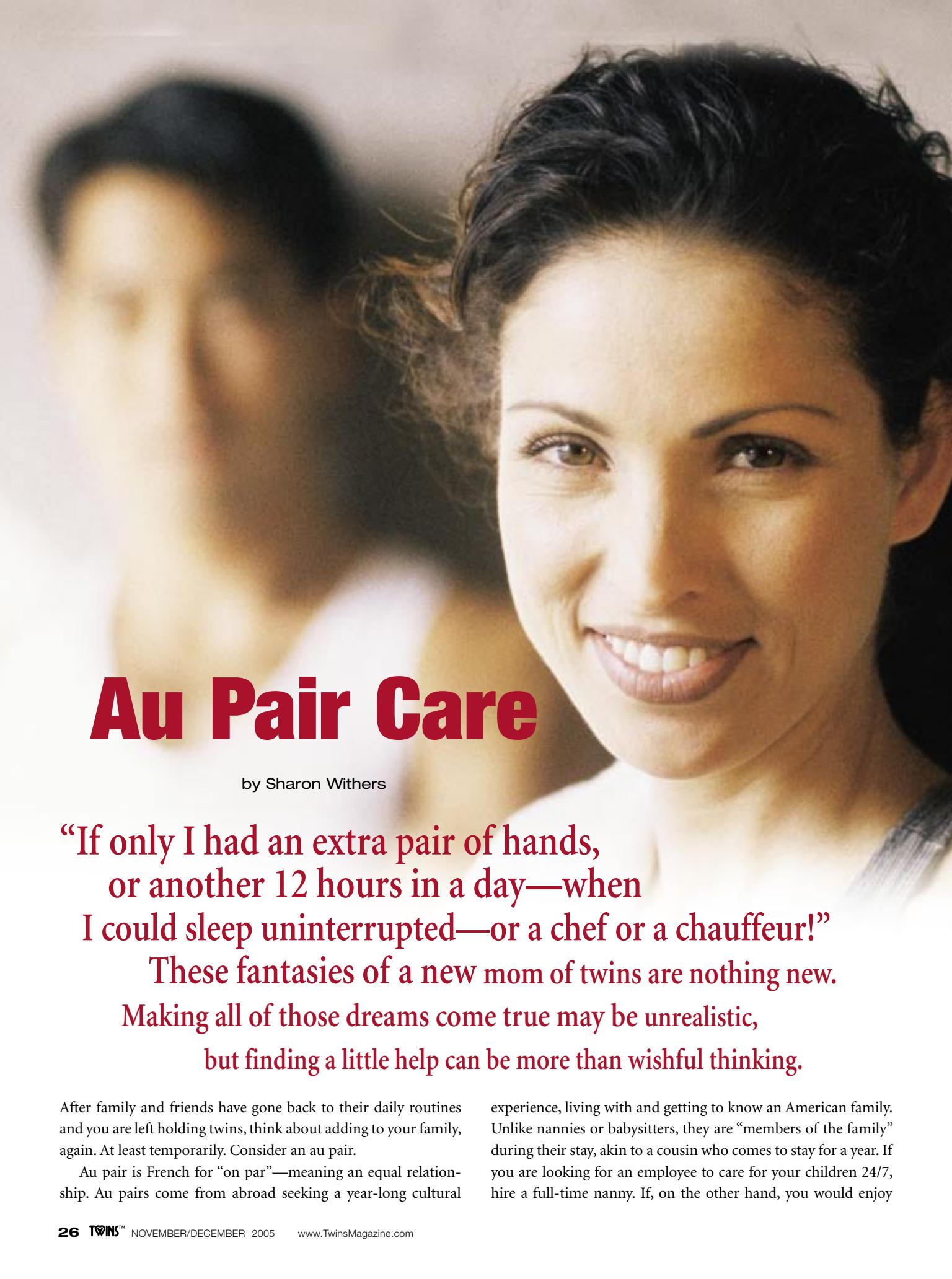
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A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a baby in her arms, whose face is partially visible in the background. The lighting is soft and focused on the woman's face.

Au Pair Care

by Sharon Withers

**“If only I had an extra pair of hands,
or another 12 hours in a day—when
I could sleep uninterrupted—or a chef or a chauffeur!”**

**These fantasies of a new mom of twins are nothing new.
Making all of those dreams come true may be unrealistic,
but finding a little help can be more than wishful thinking.**

After family and friends have gone back to their daily routines and you are left holding twins, think about adding to your family, again. At least temporarily. Consider an au pair.

Au pair is French for “on par”—meaning an equal relationship. Au pairs come from abroad seeking a year-long cultural

experience, living with and getting to know an American family. Unlike nannies or babysitters, they are “members of the family” during their stay, akin to a cousin who comes to stay for a year. If you are looking for an employee to care for your children 24/7, hire a full-time nanny. If, on the other hand, you would enjoy

the informality of welcoming a cultural exchange student into your home as a big sister for your children, an au pair could be a rewarding experience for your entire family.

Au pairs come in all shapes, sizes and genders and from all countries. But, honestly, most au pairs are young women, who take this opportunity to travel and live abroad following high school or college. Some have lived quite sheltered lives, and are fairly unsophisticated, particularly about driving or city life, while others come from larger towns or cities.

Personality variations are as wide as the ocean. Some au pairs hold degrees in childhood education or child care. Some are nurses on a year's sabbatical. Some have served as nannies for years in Europe. A few have specific experience with multiples. Others are older siblings who've cared for younger brothers and sisters or been babysitters for family members and friends.

Au pair programs and host families in the United States that bring foreigners to the country on J1 one-year program-specific visas are governed by guidelines the U.S. Department of State sets forth. Au pairs must be at least 18 years old but under 26, fluent in English and must enroll in an educational program while here.

Your au pair is allowed to provide personalized child care up to 45 hours per week, up to 10 hours per day. Most au pairs have weekends off, except when on vacations or weekend outings with the family. Duties can include child care and light housekeeping related to child care such as laundry, preparing the children's meals, straightening their rooms and driving them to school and appointments.

About 3% of all births in the U.S. are twins, but about 10% of the families who use Cultural Care Au Pair have twins, according to Vice President Judd Liebman, who is a new father of twins. Part of the popularity of au pairs among families with multiples may be attributed to affordability and flexibility.

Affordable

Americans spend an estimated \$40 billion a year on child care. In the U.S., about 85% of fathers and 60% of mothers work outside the home. Child care can take a big chunk out of working parents' paychecks, sometimes making it almost pointless to work. Unlike day care and some nannies, au pair costs remain the same for any number of children or geographic location, usually about \$275 a week, or just under \$15,000 a year.

By comparison, day care for two often costs \$400 to \$650 per week, or \$20,000 to \$34,000 a year, depending on how many days and weeks a center is used. The cost of a private nanny varies



Three Hebert boys (l. to r. Reid, Tyler, and Ryan) with au pair Claudia Muhs at a Boston Red Sox Game.

widely, depending on education and training, experience, hours, number of children and duties, but usually ranges upwards of \$500 a week. A top Boston-area certified nanny earns \$775 to \$865 per week, a whopping \$40,000-plus a year.

Flexible

An au pair lives in your house, so her hours on duty can be arranged to cover your family's shift work, evenings out and impromptu needs. Having an au pair is especially appealing for single parents.

For example, an au pair can work six hours from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., take five hours off from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and work four hours

from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. This schedule wouldn't be feasible with a nanny. An au pair's hours can be scheduled on your family calendar to cover dental appointments, date nights and special occasions. You must simply agree on the hours and take into consideration your au pair's class schedule and au pair functions arranged by the agency.

Kimberly Luba's husband travels in his job. "If I have to take one twin to the emergency room in the middle of the night, I don't have to wake up his twin because the au pair is in the house." Luba is the mom of 4-year-old boy/girl twins, Kyle and Lilly. Her family lives in Andover, N.J., and is hosting its second au pair.

Luba works between 6:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. weekdays. "I just didn't think I could get twins up and ready for day care and get to work on time."

Chris Gendell of Annapolis, Md., works at home on projects for a Washington, D.C.-area nonprofit. "I looked into a nanny or

'A good au pair is a godsend...'

Sue Kowalski, of Glen Ellyn, Ill., had a succession of four au pairs to help with her twins, Emily and Kelsey, now 17, and an older daughter Katie, now 20. Sue brought her twins home after long stays in NICU after they were born two months prematurely. Sue was working at home, too.

"I decided to go au pair route because I was concerned about the amount of time I would be able to spend with each child, having three kids under 3. I wanted to have plenty of on-on-one time with Katie, who was 2½, and I was working at home as an actuarial consultant.

"Four of our au pairs stayed the full year, and one stayed only 3 or 4 weeks. It took only two weeks for us to realize it wouldn't work out with the one who didn't last, and we got a replacement very quickly. The one who didn't work out wasn't flexible enough. On Monday morning she wanted me to give her my fixed schedule for a whole week in advance of when I was going to be gone and when she would have to work. I just couldn't do that easily. I thought, 'Who's working for who, here?'

"The situation is quite different for a mom with an au pair if both are at home all the time. If you're heading off to work at 7 a.m., it's entirely different than if you're a stay-at-home mom, which I was. With the au pair living there, you really don't get much time alone with your kids. And it's almost as if you're raising a 19-year-old as well...there are all the issues involved with the au pair taking your car, making their own plans during the day and for the evening, having their own life. Evenings are sometimes a problem, too. If you want your au pair to stay home and care for the kids while you attend a meeting or go out to dinner, sometimes she doesn't want to do that, because all of her au pair friends put in their hours during the day and are free in the evening.

"The one who didn't work out simply didn't jump right in and interact with the kids. Our first au pair, Dominique, was perfect. She was such a helper, and took charge right away, and really got involved with the kids. Some au pairs just want to come to the U.S. and have fun for a year. Some really don't want to be part of the family, which is what they're supposed to be."

"Our house had a lower level with a bedroom and bathroom, and the au pair could watch TV down there.. In terms of privacy issues, it's just like with your kids, finding privacy. You don't really have your private discussions with your husband in the middle of the kitchen. That wasn't really any problem.

"If you need them beyond 45 hours a week, or if they are bad drivers and have accidents with your family cars, or if there is too much social life and dating and they come in really late or if they are drinking these can be problems. All of the au pairs have only driven in Europe since they were 18. They're like a 16-year-old driver over here who just got a license. One of ours ran into the wall of our garage and we asked her to pay for the car repair because the event was unnecessary and avoidable.

"Another time, after a heavy snowfall, our au pair was quite confident she'd be okay driving on snow and ice even though she'd never seen snow before. I didn't let her take the car then. Another time an au pair wanted to meet her boyfriend at midnight for a date, and I had to say no, that was too late to be going out. You really are a mother to a teenager. You have to put up with their moods and their teenage personalities.

"I was happy after four years to be done with au pairs, to have my house back. They were very helpful. I'm glad I did it. But I wanted my house to myself—when your kids go off to school or preschool, you have a few hours to yourself. But with an au pair there, I wouldn't really have my house to myself.

"Each year, it's hard to gear up for a new au pair, especially if you have become really attached to the one who just left. We still stay in touch with several au pairs...Katie met up with Dominique last summer in Avignon, France, and they spent four days together. We also stay in touch with Birgid, from Austria. The effort to stay in touch really has to come from the au pair. Birgid has come to visit several times.

"I now work with a lady who had au pairs for 18 years to help her care for her disabled child—16 were great, two were not. That's a good recommendation."

sitter, but I liked being able to set the hours and schedule an au pair as we needed her. For example, my husband Dave and I can have a date night, or I can go to my book club during the day." The Gendells are hosting their first au pair, Dinara Bagautdinova, 20, from Russia. Their twins, Delaney and Trey, are a year old and they have a 4-year-old daughter, Abigail.

Cross-cultural benefits

Beyond affordability and flexibility, au pair care offers the benefits of a cross-cultural experience. Many families find they like having an additional family member.

"I thought I would not like it," Luba said. "I was completely against a live-in, but once I saw it was my best option, I just tried it." Luba's house has three bedrooms, one of which belongs to her au pair, Marin Moeller, 24, from Germany. "I don't feel any intrusion at all, and Marin's bedroom is right across the hall from our bedroom. It's a comfort to have someone there."

Jill Sangl, mom to 5-year-old twins Alex and Josh, lives in Oakwood, Ill. She tried day care in her own home and considered day care in a caregiver's home before turning to au pair care. "We wanted our sons to be the focus of (a caregiver's) attention and not an additional couple of kids," said Sangl, whose family is hosting its second au pair, Renata Heranj from Croatia, who is in her second year abroad.

"Additionally, our family lives quite far from us, so having an au pair in our home created a new family member. Our au pair is a big sister to our sons and a friend to my husband and me," Sangl added.

Au pairs often turn out to be good friends who stay in touch with their families for years. Justine Hebert of Shirley, Mass., a local childcare coordinator for Cultural Care and the mother of 7-year-old twins Ryan and Reid and 5-year-old Tyler, said her family stays in touch with all seven of their au pairs. Hebert is a school teacher and has her summers off, giving her the time to handle local au pair placements.

This past summer a former au pair, Krystyna Goik from Poland, returned for an office internship with Cultural Care and stayed with the Heberts and their current au pair, Claudia Muhs from Germany.

Cross-cultural opportunities abound: Bagautdinova teaches the Gendell family Russian and her ethnic Tada music.

"We like learning words and phrases in our au pair's language. We've learned to cook some traditional foods and look for Croatian and German food products at our local market," said Sangl. "We now celebrate St. Nicholas Day (Dec. 6) and have observed special



The Luba family, l. to r. Kyle, Larry, Maren Moeller, the au pair, Kimberly and Lilly on the first day of nursery school.

holiday traditions. Alex and Josh are very aware of non-English languages being spoken when we are in new environments. We are now a more 'global' family."

The right match

Hebert, who helps place Cultural Care au pairs with families in her area, says the agency always tries to place an au pair having experience with multiples in a family with multiples, and tends to place older, more experienced au pairs with families having multiples.

All au pairs are qualified, but often in different ways. When your twins are young, you may look for a different set of skills than when they are older. For example, driving experience may be more important for an au pair who must chauffeur twins to gymnastics, music lessons and school.

The first step to a good match is self-examination. It is important to articulate your lifestyle, personality, likes and dislikes then decide what kind of person will fit into your family. "Some families want a really independent au pair; others look for one

who is more family-oriented and wants to hang out and have dinner with the family in the evening," Hebert said.

Asking specific questions in the telephone interview is the secret to a good match, according to many of the moms.

Luba e-mails her telephone interview questions to her candidates ahead of time. "They are nervous and if they can prepare, it helps calm their nerves."

One of Luba's first questions was, "Do you have a problem waking up at 6 a.m.?" She asked if taking care of twins scared

12 Steps to make a good match

- ✓ Examine your family's lifestyle patterns
- ✓ Assess your personality
- ✓ Articulate your likes and dislikes
- ✓ Have a list of issues to discuss
- ✓ Establish solid "house rules" in writing
- ✓ Ask a lot of specific questions
- ✓ Determine age-specific au pair needs
- ✓ Evaluate au pair's skillset
- ✓ Be realistic about expectations
- ✓ State your expectations clearly
- ✓ Understand employer relationship
- ✓ Be aware of your potential liability

candidates. "If the interview doesn't go well, I don't go any further," Luba said. She wasn't as confident about what she needed when interviewing for her first au pair, but it got easier. "If you have a good sense of people, you can click (with the individual) on the phone. If you have problems later on, the number one reason is a breakdown in communication."

Hebert also carefully reviews candidates' applications for compatible values. "If I see that an au pair likes dancing and clubs, I know she won't be happy here. We live in a small town and there aren't a lot of discos near here." She doesn't interview smokers—that, along with a few others are red flags. "I look for other qualities, such as athletic and sports interests."

Boyfriends are sometimes part of the picture. If an au pair has an established relationship with a boyfriend at home and he supports her year abroad, homesickness is seldom a problem. If, however, he is a new boyfriend nagging her to come home, she could give in to the pressure and disappear quickly. Au pairs sometimes meet boyfriends here, in which case, the house rules need to cover the au pair's behavior in that relationship.

Attitude sets the tone. "Think of it as a cultural exchange program in which your children are benefiting from expanding their world," Hebert advised. "The family must welcome the au pair as a family member. She is a big sister to the children."

"Don't treat your au pair like an employee," Luba warned. "She is someone you trust, like a brother, sister or daughter." Just as you would with any family member, you should expect

the au pair to abide by your house rules. Spelling out the house rules clearly, in writing and in every conceivable area is the foundation of a good stay.

"Lay out your expectations clearly," advised Luba. "Write the house rules; verbal doesn't go anywhere. And don't beat around the bush. If you have an issue, don't wait until it's a big problem."

Au pairs usually have use of your family car and a cell phone, as well as many of your appliances. It is helpful to train au pairs to use everything, even if you take it for granted. After one month Luba discovered that one of her au pairs was not using the washing machine correctly, so they had a brief instruction session.

"Au pairs are sometimes afraid to ask questions," Hebert explained. "They think their family will think they are stupid." Many au pairs arrive with fake IDs that allow them to do underage drinking. This can be a major problem, say parents who've used au pairs. Be sure to check with the agency about the drinking policy, and be clear how you will handle the problem of underage alcohol consumption..

Moeller, an au pair for the Lubas, arrived in the U.S. during the summer. She advises new au pairs and host families: "Be open and talk a lot." She appreciates the respect the Lubas show for her personal time. "I like that they always ask me to do things (with them) and I like to spend my free time with them, but I also like it that they are okay if I need to spend some time alone."

Are you able to delegate?

Problems arise when families set expectations too high, assume too much or treat an au pair like an employee. "That's when she gets homesick," said Hebert.

If there is a problem, the au pair and family should try to work it out among themselves. Breakdown in communication is the key reason relationships fail. "When an au pair comes to a family, I sit down with the au pair and the family and talk about what we do if a problem comes up," Hebert said. "Host families want their au pairs to be happy, but it is often hard for au pairs to speak up."

Sometimes it works the other way as well. "It is hard for me to delegate tasks," admitted Sangl. "I should ask our au pair to help with more of our household tasks."

Staying busy is the best antidote to homesickness for an au pair. If the au pair can admit she is suffering from homesickness and talk with other au pairs and her family, it helps. "The worst thing she can do is sit alone in her room. If she can cook foods from her country, share photos of her family and e-mail her family, then she will probably get over it fairly quickly," says Hebert.

Like all local coordinators with Cultural Care, Hebert organizes special outings for au pairs to meet other au pairs and taste U.S. culture. They might go to a baseball game, take a harbor cruise, go apple picking or meet at Hebert's house for a night of

scrapbooking. "Our first au pair said her entire year was like a vacation," Hebert said.

It's not good-bye

Even the most successful year comes to an end. One drawback often cited with au pair care is saying good-bye... again and again. No sooner do you become attached to an au pair and settled in with her, than it seems time for her to leave. Au pairs are now permitted to extend for three, six, nine or 12 months, and some do.

A popular strategy to combat the good-bye blues is overlapping au pairs' arrivals and departures. If overlapping is not possible, Hebert recommends an au pair always talk to her successor to share information, especially if they come from the same country and can meet to share photos and stories in their own language.

"Three weeks before Annemarie Gyulai, our first au pair, left, we started talking about her going home to her mommy and Marin coming to stay with us," said Luba. The whole family including Annemarie went to the airport, carrying balloons and signs, to greet the incoming au pair, Maren Moeller. "We made a big production of it." The au pairs were able to communicate instructions in German, with all the helpful tips Gyulai had compiled over the year. The day Gyulai left was sad, but Luba's boys handled it well, she reports.

"We have a party at the end of the au pair's year," Hebert said, "and we scrapbook the entire year." Hebert, who usually has her au pairs overlap their stays by a week, takes the departing au pair to the airport by herself to reduce the number of sad good-byes. "I'm the one crying," she said. "And we don't say 'good-bye,' but 'We'll see you again.'" ♦

State Department-designated au pair agencies

Agent Au Pair
San Francisco, Calif.
415-462-1906
info@agentaupair.com

AuPairCare Inc.
San Francisco, Calif.
www.aupaircare.com
(800) 4AUPAIR

Au Pair Foundation (Face The World Foundation)
San Rafael, Calif.
www.aupairfoundation.org
(866) 428-7247
manager@aupairfoundation.org

Au Pair in America (American Institute For Foreign Study)
Stamford, Conn.
www.aupairinamerica.com
(800) 928-7247
aupair.info@aifs.com

Au Pair International Inc.
Denver, Colo.
(888) 649-2876
hostfamily@aupairint.com

Au Pair USA/InterExchange
New York, N.Y.
www.interexchange.org
(800) Au-Pairs
aupair@interexchange.org

CHI Au Pair USA (Cultural Homestay International)
San Anselmo, Calif.
www.chiaupairusa.org
(800) 343-HOST

Cultural Care Au Pair (EF Education)
Cambridge, Mass.
www.culturalcare.com
(800) 333 6056
aupair@culturalcare.com

EurAupair Intercultural Child Care Programs
www.eurapair.com
Laguna Beach, Calif.
(800) 901-2002 (west)
Alexandria, Va.
(800) 713-2002 (east)
info@eurapair.com

goAuPair (American Cultural Exchange)
Montclair, N.J.
www.goaupair.com
888-aupair1
twilson@goaupair.com

USAuPair, Inc.
Lake Oswego, Ore.
www.usaupair.com
(503) 697-6872
info@usaupair.com

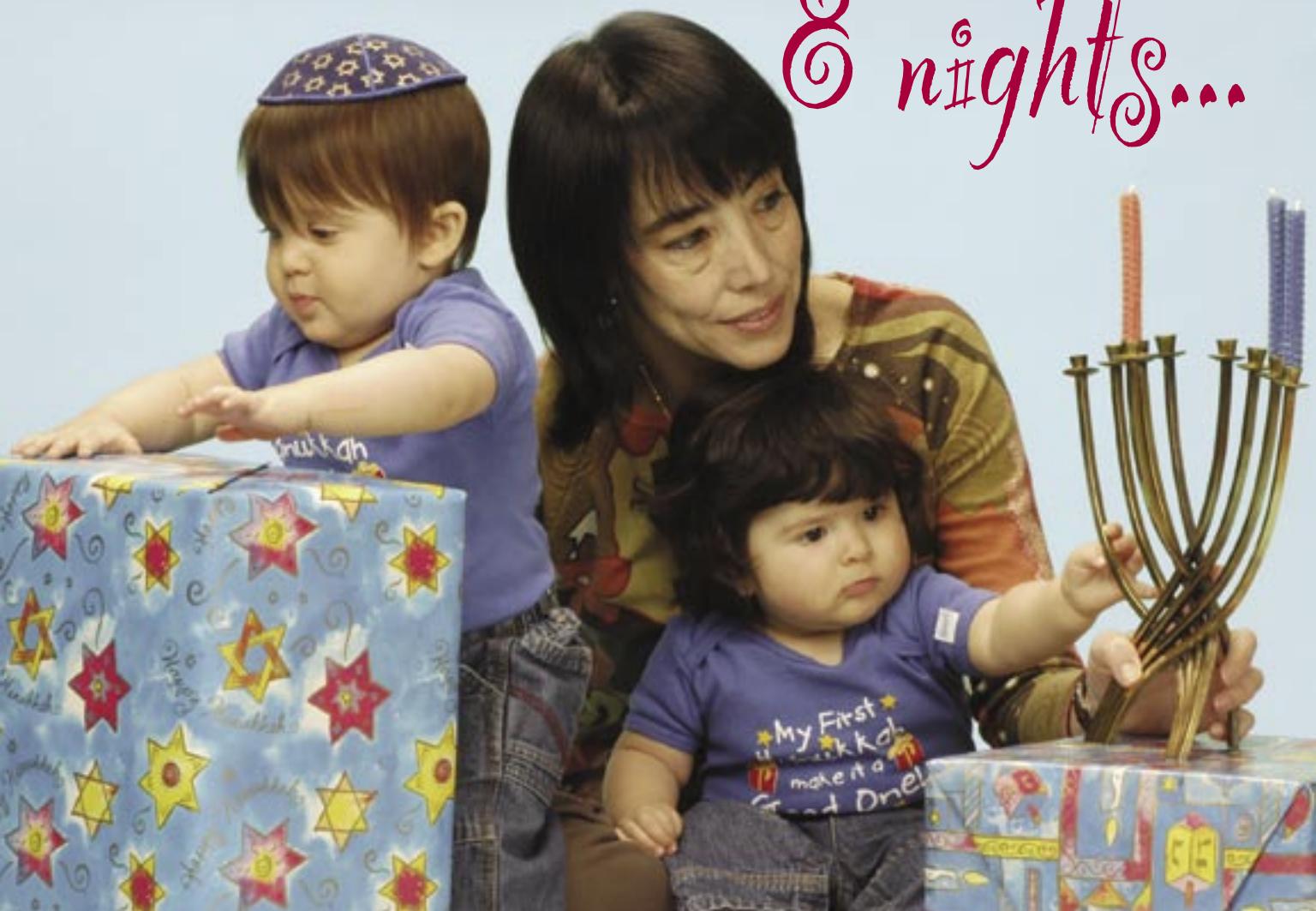
Related Organizations

U.S. Department of State
<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jex-changes/private/aupair.htm>
(202) 203-5096

International Au Pair Association (IAPA)
www.iapa.org/
IAPA was created in 1994 by cultural exchange organizations worldwide to monitor and improve the quality of all aspects of au pair exchange programs at an international level.

Trek-America
www.trekamerica.com
800-221 0596
info@trekusasales.com

Light the candles for 8 nights...



Noah, Julie and Lilah with gifts, the menorah and candles ready for the family Hanukkah celebration.

The Jewish festival of rededication, Hanukkah, also called the festival of lights, lasts eight days. On each of the eight nights the candles must be kindled at nightfall.

Hanukkah is a major family time for the Rubins of Denver, Colorado. Julie and Rick make sure each of their twins, Noah and Lilah, has an individual menorah. On each of eight nights they light the candles with their kids, helping a lot since Noah and Lilah are only 18 months old now. But by the time they're 3 or 4 years old,

they'll each be lighting the candles by themselves—with watchful parents alongside, to be sure.

The Hanukkah story, one that celebrates freedom for the Jews, is about the miracle of lamp oil lasting for eight nights though there was enough only for one night. The Rubins retell the story

each night with their children. While the twins are babies and toddlers, they have a special felt fabric menorah with little felt stick-on candles and flames. This is a very popular plaything with the twins, says Julie.

Julie goes overboard with decorations throughout the house, making this annual holiday a big deal for her children, and also for Rick's two daughters, 19 and 17, from his first marriage. Julie places an electric menorah in the window, and as a family they add one light bulb to it each night for the eight nights of Hanukkah. (Next year, each twin will have an electric menorah for two separate windows of the house.)

Julie and Rick sing the Hanukkah prayers together, followed by other fun celebratory songs with their kids, such as *The Little Dreidl* song. Rick's daughters have fun singing and playing Hanukkah games with the baby twins, reliving their own years as young children celebrating the season.

Julie and Rick invite a huge extended family and friends over one night during Hanukkah for a big latke (potato pancakes) party and play the Dreidl game, spinning the top containing four Hebrew letters that determine whether the spinner gets a prize of M&Ms or Hanukkah gelt (chocolate coins covered in gold foil), or none at all.

Rick's collection of over 400 dreidls from all over the world are always on display. They're all different sizes, and appeal tremendously to Noah and Lilah. Noah in particular constantly wants to pull the whole display down to play with the dreidls. Some dreidls contain a slightly different Hebrew letter on one side, indicating they came from Israel. The babies learn quickly that the different dreidls contain slightly differing messages: A character indicating "The miracle happened here" if it is a dreidl from Israel, versus a character saying "The miracle happened there" if it came from a different part of the world.

Tradition has it that Jewish children receive one gift each night during Hanukkah, usually small gifts most nights with one bigger gift on the final night of Hanukkah. Grandparents usually give clothes to their grandchildren, and Julie says this year the "big gift" will be little ride-in cars for Lilah and Noah. Sometimes she gives them identical playthings, such as Little Tykes cars, but if the present is a book, a stuffed animal, or a pull-along critter, Julie is careful to give them each something different.

Julie hopes to ensure Lilah and Noah remember the religious significance of Hanukkah as they get older, and don't become overwhelmed by the gift-receiving part of the holiday. One way she does this is by participating in several different Moms and Tots programs at her synagogue, where there is much discussion of the holiday and the groups sing songs of the season. This helps extend the Hanukkah celebration beyond the eight days, making it more meaningful for Noah and Lilah. ♡

Miracle of the oil

When Alexander the Great conquered Syria, Egypt and Palestine, he allowed the lands under his control to continue with their own religions and retain autonomy. Many Jews practiced much of the Hellenistic culture, adopting the language, customs and dress as do many Jews living in the modern world today.

A century later, a successor to Alexander the Great, known as Antiochus IV, controlled the region. He began to oppress the Jews, carrying out massacres of the population, prohibiting the practice of the Jewish religion, and desecrating the Temple by requiring the sacrifice of pigs at the altar.

Two groups opposed Antiochus: a nationalistic group led by Mattathias the Hasmonean and his son Judah Maccabee, and a traditionalist group called the Chasidim. They joined forces in a revolt, overcoming the armies of Antiochus and rededicating the Temple.

After their victory over Antiochus, very little oil was left at the time the Temple was rededicated. Oil was used for the candelabrum in the Temple, which was to burn every night throughout the night. There was only enough oil to burn for one day, but it burned for eight days. The eight-day festival of lights was declared to commemorate this miracle. The holiday celebrates the miracle of the oil, not the military victory.

On each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, the candles must be kindled at nightfall. On the first night, one candle is placed in the center of the menorah, and one on the far right. Both are lit. The following three blessings are said:

—Blessed be You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and commands us to light candles for Hanukkah.

—Blessed be You, O Lord our God, Who worked miracles for our ancestors in those days at this very season.

—Blessed be You, O Lord our God, Who has given us Life, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

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GENERAL PARENTING

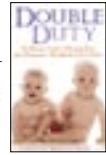
Ready or Not...Here We Come!

Elizabeth Lyons \$16.00
This author and mom of twins recognized that raising twins wouldn't be easy. In her multiples birthing class, she met a group of women who weathered their pregnancies together and became close friends. Lyons and her "multiple sorority" survive the hardships and humor of their first year with twins. Paperback, 165 pages.



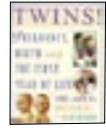
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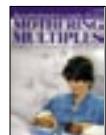
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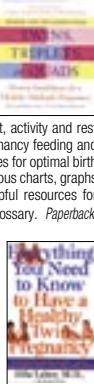
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A perinatal nurse and mother of twins writes on pregnancy, infertility technology, prenatal testing, nutrition and development, preterm labor, birth and the NICU. Paperback, 420 pages.



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Nancy Segal, Ph.D. \$18.50
Leading twin researcher and monozygotic (identical) twin, Segal sheds light on nature vs. nurture debate, shows how twins hold the keys to understanding physical and intellectual capabilities. Excellent resource for parents of twins. Paperback, 396 pages.



The Psychology of Twins: A practical handbook for parents of multiples.

Herbert L. Collier, Ph.D. \$13.95

Targeted especially for parents of children age 1 to 6, parenting expert Elizabeth Pantley provides positive approaches to help children go to bed and sleep soundly through the night. Without resorting to negative punishments to encourage children to sleep, this child-friendly book provides effective, loving solutions to common problems ranging from evening melt-downs, nightmares, night walking, and nighttime visits to a parent's bed. Paperback, 400 pages.



SLEEP

The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night

Elizabeth Pantley \$14.95
This sensible book offers a 10-step program that leads you, one day at a time, to your goal of a good night's sleep for everyone. Full of tips and suggestions, not formulas. Paperback, 256 pages.



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Nancy J. Sipes, Ph.D. \$16.95

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Nighttime Parenting: How to Get Your Baby and Child to Sleep

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A mother of twin boys talks to twins of all ages and writes with insight, warmth and humor, what it's actually like to be a twin. These stories provide a fresh look into twintwinship. Paperback, 188 pages.



Facing the loss of a multiple

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William H. Woodwell Jr. \$25.00
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Dealing with twins is doubly tricky. Report on discipline and behavioral issues will enhance your parental coping skills, ease tensions and help you through difficult times. Your children will benefit enormously. 54 pages.

A Guide for Parents Who Want Their Twins to Share a Classroom

Report helps you persuade school officials to allow your twins to remain in the same classroom. Gives crucial information to parents, also provides educators' perspectives. 25 pages.

Separate Classrooms or Together?

Multiples face unique schooling challenges and questions. To separate or not? What to do when one succeeds, the other doesn't? Report helps light the way down the difficult educational path. 58 pages.

Preschool and Kindergarten – A Guide For Parents of Twins

Preschool and kindergarten are exciting times in the lives of young multiple children, and for their parents, too. From gathering supplies for school, to coaxing nervous twins out of the car on their very first day, to supporting the growth of children as they learn and increase their knowledge, this collection of articles by parenting experts can help all parents of school-age twins. Read how twins learn in school and how parents can help teachers and other students identify each twin. 36 pages.

Getting Ready: When You're Expecting Twins

NEW! This report covers everything from understanding twin zygosity to fostering a healthy pregnancy to a primer on the NICU to synchronizing schedules and hiring a nanny or part-time helper. This report offers solid advice and knowledgeable information that new parents of multiple children absolutely need to know. The report also provides help for everything from bed rest, and expecting the unexpected, to critical concerns for preemie babies to the stress a family may experience when twins arrive. 72 pages.

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Twins

Mary Ellen Mark \$35.00

Mark is one of America's leading photographers. Her work has been in New Yorker, Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, Vogue and Life. She attended the popular "Twins Days" festival in Twinsburg, Ohio, for 2 years photo-graphing twins with her large-format camera, producing this amazing book of 80 stunning images that depict the bond between twins and captures their unique individuality. Hardcover, 96 pages.



TWINS: Photographs by David Fields;

Essays by Ruth and

Rachel Sandweiss \$27.50

Beautiful collection of photographs and short essays celebrate twintwinship—27 pairs of twins, including Muhammad Ali's twins, Jane Seymour's twins, Mario and Aldo Andretti, the first NASA twin astronauts, twin Olympians, twin brothers who survived the Holocaust. Coffee-table book. Hardcover, 144 pages.

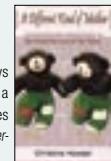


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Christine Howser \$13.95

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The simple questions—whether to breastfeed or bottle feed, weaning, handling colic, and many more—become more complicated when you have two or more babies. Full of useful insights from mothers who have been there! 40 pages.

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Premature Twins and Triplets

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NICU

Helps parents deal with their fears of the hospital NICU, challenges of nurturing their preemies, and bringing their tiny babies home. 54 pages.

Higher Order Multiples

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Multiples 7 to 12: The Middle Years

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Twins get ready for bedtime by brushing their teeth, getting into their pajamas and settling down for the evening. Illustrated by Sam Williams. Paperback, 24 pages.



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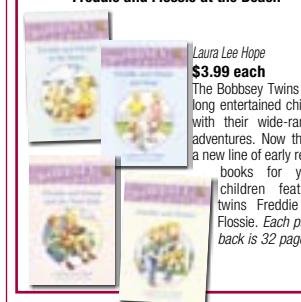
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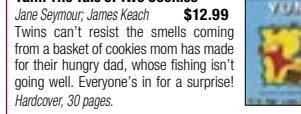
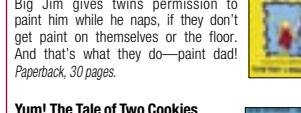
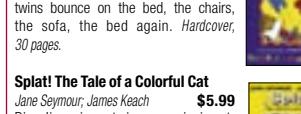
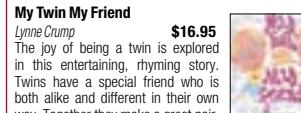
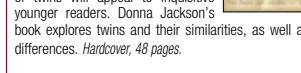
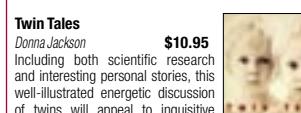
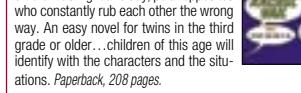
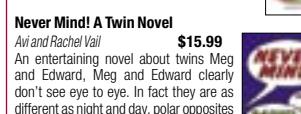
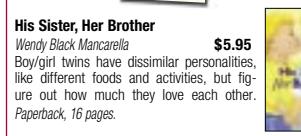


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Laura Lee Hope \$3.99 each
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By My Brother's Side

Tiki and Ronde Barber \$16.95
One summer day, while riding bikes in a special secret place, one brother falls and badly hurts his knee. Although the doctor warns he may never play sports again, the support and comfort from his twin brother and his mother helps him recover from his accident in time for the first football game of the fall. Hardcover, 32 pages.



Game Day

Tiki and Ronde Barber \$16.95
Tiki and Ronde play together on their Pee Wee League team. Ronde blocks, and Tiki runs for the big scores. Coach Mike introduces a special play for the brothers to use in their big game against the toughest team in their league. Hardcover, 32 pages.



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Barbara M. Joosse \$15.95
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Barbara J. Neasi \$4.95
Simple story written by a mother of twins, describes how twins are alike and yet different. Vocabulary list helps children learn new words. Paperback, 32 pages.



T is for Twins: An ABC Book

Mary Bond \$15.95
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Twinnies

Eve Burling \$6.00
Older sister says life with "twinnies" isn't always easy. Sometimes the older child is ignored and frustrated, but being a big sister has its special rewards. Paperback, 30 pages.



Twin to Twin

Margaret O'Hair \$15.95
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Sweet Jasmine, Nice Jackson

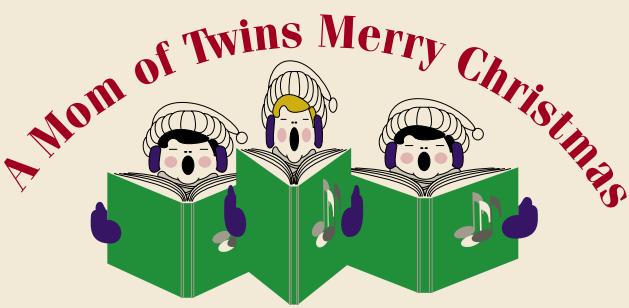
Robbie H. Harris \$16.95
Jasmine and Jackson are two-year-old twins and are out to explore the world. A delightful and entertaining story for young toddler-aged twins that also includes informative short sidebars with information for parents about twins. Hardcover, 40 pages.



Twice as Nice: What It's Like to Be a Twin

Nicole Rubel \$16.50
What's it like to be a twin? Nicole knows because she is a twin. A potpourri of facts, witty little riddles and history, the book will appeal to all families with multiples. Hardcover, 32 pages.





by Linda Chatterjee

On the first of December, all I had to do...

Was bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the second of December, all I had to do...

Was give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the third of December, all I had to do ...

Was stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the fourth of December, all I had to do...

Was call all the in-laws, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the fifth of December, all I had to do...

Was race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the sixth of December, all I had to do...

Was six loads of laundry, race round the mall (again), call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the seventh of December, all I had to do...

Was take the children swimming, do six loads of laundry, race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the eighth of December, all I had to do...

Was wrap eight presents, take the children swimming, do six loads of laundry, race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the ninth of December, all I had to do ...

Was send nine cards, wrap eight presents, take the children swimming, do six loads of laundry, race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the tenth of December, all I had to do...

Was snow-plow the drive, send nine cards, wrap eight presents, take the children swimming, do six loads of laundry, race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

On the eleventh of December, all I had to do...

Was fix the Christmas lights, snow-plow the drive, send nine cards, wrap eight presents, take the children swimming, do six loads of laundry, race round the mall, call another in-law, stop the kids from fighting, give the twins a bath, and bake one dozen Christmas cookies.

When it came time for Christmas, all I had to do...

Was fill the Christmas stockings, fix the Christmas lights, install ten batteries, undo ninety twist-ties, clean up the wrapping, join in the singing, cook a turkey dinner, unblock the John, welcome all the in-laws, stop them all from fighting, give the kids a hug, And EAT one dozen Christmas cookies!

Merry Christmas!



Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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B) Paid and/or Requested Circulation:

1. Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: 25707 (average during preceding 12 months), 16884 (actual nearest filing date).
2. Paid In-County Subscriptions: 0 (average during preceding 12 months), 0 (actual nearest filing date).
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1. Outside County: 0 (average during preceding 12 months), 0 (actual nearest filing date).
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E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 292 (average during preceding 12 months), 425 (actual nearest filing date).

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J) Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 95.63% (average during preceding 12 months), 96.18% (actual nearest filing date).

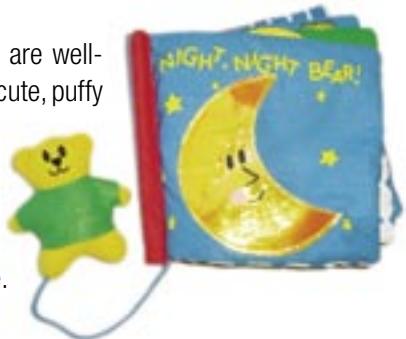
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Susan J. Alt, Editor

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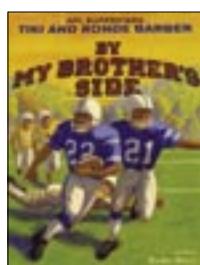
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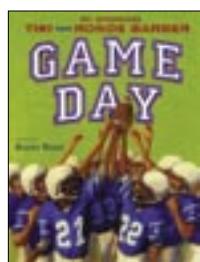
TWINS Bookshelf Spotlight



By My Brother's Side

by Tiki and Ronde Barber \$16.95
Twin brothers Tiki and Ronde Barber are star players for the National Football League. Loosely based on their lives as children, this is the story of two brothers who are best friends and love sports like baseball and football.

One summer day, while riding bikes in a special secret place, one brother falls and badly hurts his knee. Although the doctor warns he may never play sports again, the support and comfort from his twin brother and his mother helps him recover from his accident in time for the first football game of the fall. *Hardbound, 32 pages.*

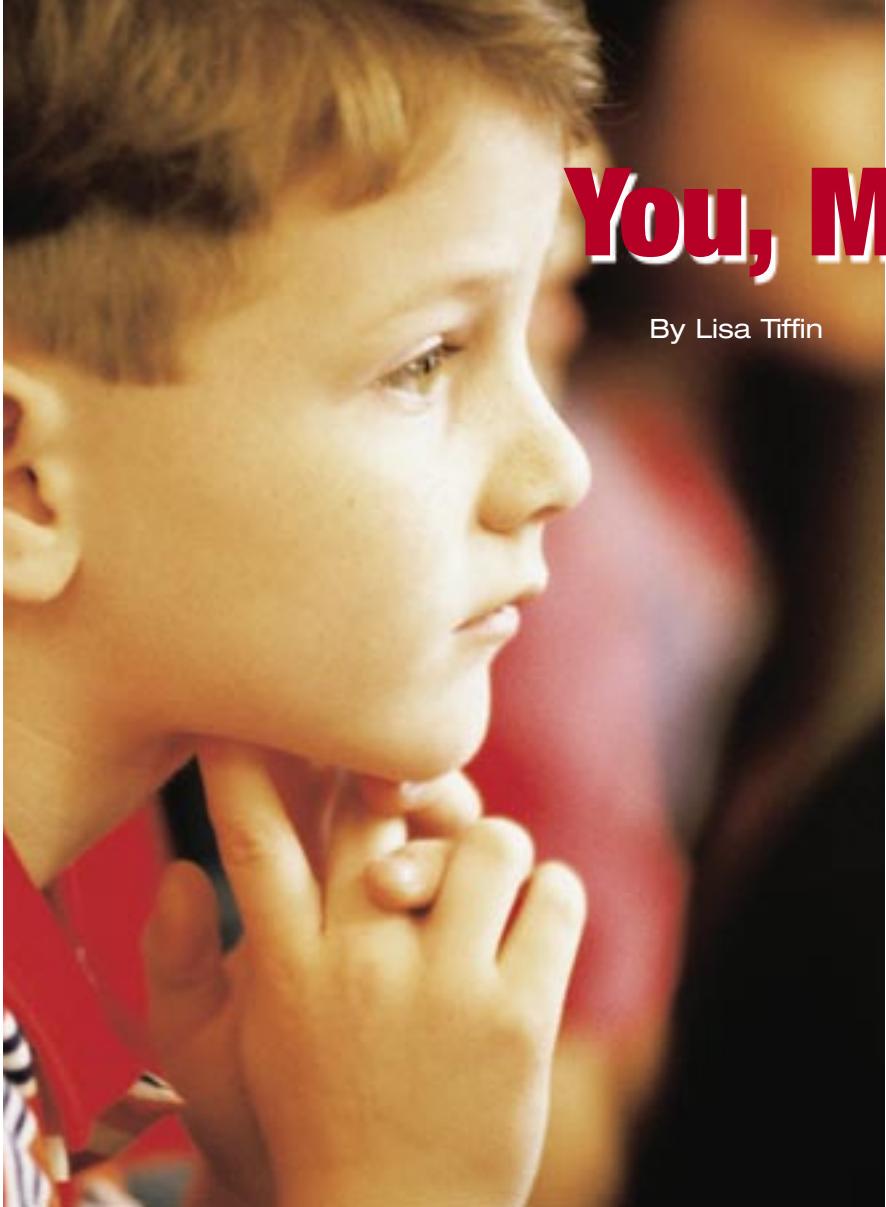


Game Day

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Twin Tiki and Ronde play together on their Pee Wee League team. Ronde blocks, and Tiki runs for the big scores. As Tiki gets all the attention, his brother Ronde feels sad that no one ever notices the blockers. After Ronde sits out a game with an ankle injury, Coach Mike introduces a special play for the brothers to use in their big game against the toughest team in their league, the Knights. *Hardbound, 32 pages.*

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You, Me and We:

By Lisa Tiffin

generally wear matching outfits, but I have always felt that with a little effort, the boys could be easily distinguished from one another based on their physical features. And even though the offender was a likable four-year-old boy, I was a little put out that he resorted to using character flaws to distinguish my boys.

The question got to me all the more because I've always viewed Andy and Matt as equal in intelligence, attitude and ability. It's very hard, when you've spent several years proclaiming and wondering over how very identical your children are, to admit perhaps there are subtle—or not so subtle—differences about them.

Until Elliott's observation, the very nature of the twins' sameness had made them special. We laughed and joked about our mini-celebrity status in our neighborhood. People I wouldn't recognize would approach us in grocery stores and gas stations and ask how the twins were, and when we asked how they knew the twins they would announce they were our neighbors. Even strangers would talk to us, stopping us at restaurants, malls and parks to coo over our babies in the double stroller. It got to the point where we began to plan extra time for each excursion to accommodate people's fascination with our twins.

Loving the attention...at first

The boys, too, seemed to enjoy this attention. When they were about two, Andy once leaned out of his stroller to stop a very nice looking lady who had the audacity to walk by him without even glancing in his direction. But eventually we began to notice that the label of twin had lost some of its luster. When the boys turned four, they began to resist the idea that they were similar. Once, in the parking lot of a store, we overheard a child pointing out that the boys were twins. Our boys shouted in unison, "No we're not!"

"Are you the one who shares?"

We first started hearing that question soon after our twins, Andy and Matt, began playing with our new neighbor, Elliott. Elliott is a few months younger than our 5-year-olds, but the boys took to each other like flies to honey. Our neighbors have been here less than a year, yet the three boys are nearly inseparable, chalking the driveway, riding bikes and building Legos every chance they get.

While the boys often play as a group of three, sometimes they pair off—Matt chalking a town with Elliott on the driveway while Andy rides his bike, or Elliott and Andy building a Lego car while Matt plays trains. Other times the three play separately in close proximity to each other, but always, with the exception of a few easily fixed squabbles, the boys play

extremely well together, providing us moms with some much-needed face time with another adult.

The only real problem we've encountered is that as with most kids, Elliott has a difficult time telling Matt and Andy apart. This didn't deter Elliott, though. Using what I call "four-year-old logic," he devised his own system for determining the twins' identities. Remembering a playdate when Matt had shared his cars with him while Andy had preferred to play alone, he began asking the infamous question, "Are you the one who shares?"

Initially this question really bothered me. I had spent five years with these little boys, and to me it really wasn't that hard to tell them apart. Granted, they share 99.9 percent of their DNA, have similar mannerisms and speech patterns, and

The Road to Identity

I don't know who walked away more embarrassed, the other parents or us.

It was also about this time that Matt crept ahead of his brother in height and weight. People began to notice this and comment on it in front of the boys. The boys were less than impressed with the constant comparison. We dealt with this new wrinkle by explaining to the boys that while Matt was a little bigger, Andy was a little older since he was born exactly one minute before his brother. This suited them, and from then on when asked if they were twins, the boys excitedly told how one was taller but the other older. Inevitably, they finished with, "So we're really the same."

People still had trouble telling the boys apart, especially when they weren't standing next to each other for comparison. We tried to tell people to simply ask the boys their names, but sometimes even this was not practical, so we began to point out specific ways playmates and parents could easily tell the boys apart. We tried head shapes, but that proved a bit too subtle for most people, so we switched to certain facial features. Matt had a horizontal dimple that appeared under his eye when he laughed or cried particularly forcefully. But of course this was unreliable, especially when he was simply playing quietly.

We finally noticed that Matt had a large, dark freckle above his right eye while Andy had none. Once we realized that the boys were fine with this method, we began to point out this difference to friends, family (yes, we still have family members who have trouble telling the boys apart!), and new acquaintances. Now Andy and Matt respond to the question of who they are with, "I'm Andy. See? No freckle," or, "I'm Matt. See the freckle?"

This method had worked well until we

met Elliott. Elliott's mom often jokes that he likes to be creative with rules, often changing baseball or soccer rules to suit his own whims, and no matter how hard we both tried to stop him from asking which twin shares, he still persisted in asking his infamous question. Noticing me tense up when he asked, "Are you the one who shares?", Elliott's mom explained that both boys are good at sharing (which they really are—they've spent their entire lives sharing with each other) to no avail. We've both tried in vain to rephrase his question as, "Which boy are you, Andy or Matt?" But no matter how hard we try, Elliott asks his sharing question almost every time the boys play together.

Kids define themselves

It doesn't bother me as much anymore, though. My kids took care of that themselves. The other day Elliott asked his question while his mother attempted to correct him. I inwardly cringed and bit my tongue. Andy and Matt looked up and simply answered the question. Matt said he was the one who shared. Andy piped in to say that he shares only some of the time.

Problem solved. Andy and Matt allow Elliott to use this method to identify them, and seem comfortable defining themselves not just by their physical differences, but their unique personality traits as well. My boys taught me that ultimately the choice is theirs as to how to define themselves. No matter how others see them, it is how they view themselves that matters in the end. Most importantly, they have taught me to accept how they differ from each other as well as that it is okay if my view of them differs from how they view themselves. ♡

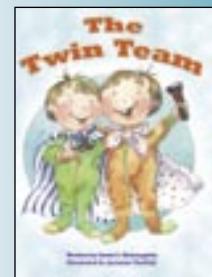
Lisa Tiffin is a freelance writer in West Henrietta, N.Y.

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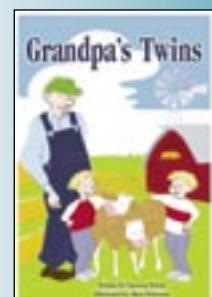
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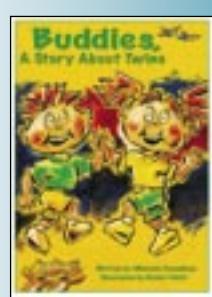
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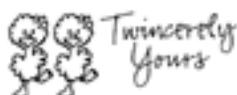
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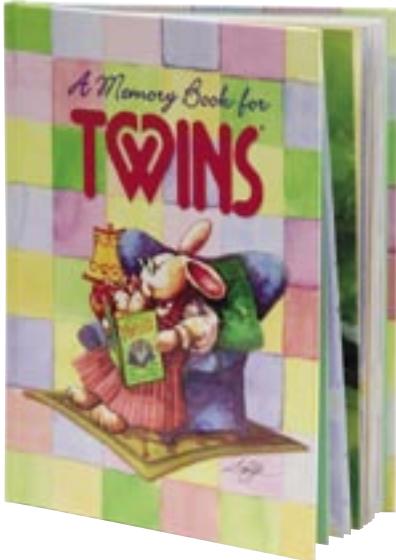
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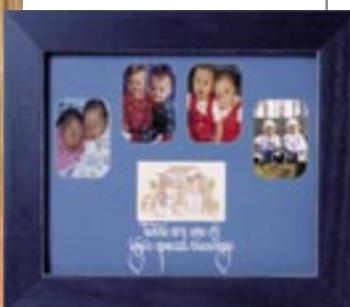
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6 Silent signs of hearing loss

All babies are now tested for hearing loss at birth, but many hearing impairments develop as babies grow. Watch for the common warning signs in your twins:

1. Family history of hearing loss in early childhood.
2. Baby is premature, or suffers from trauma or infection.
3. Baby's head, face or ears have an unusual appearance.
4. By 6 months, baby doesn't respond immediately to auditory stimulation.
5. By age 1, child develops language skills slower than peers.
6. By age 2, child doesn't follow simple instructions.

If even one of these signs is present in your twins, visit your pediatrician immediately.

—Center for Hearing & Speech, Houston, Tex.

The Joy of Twins

The night we brought our twins Arun and Sarita home from the hospital, we weathered our first midnight feeding session. Arun began howling like he hadn't been fed in days. I got ready to nurse while my husband went to get Arun from the room her shared with his sister. Then Sarita began to wail. I was unsuccessful in my attempts to get Sarita latched on, thought she was hungry and continued whimpering. Arun started crying all over again, despite his full tummy. I was on the verge of weeping myself. Then I asked my husband to grab the book beside my bed. I was desperate. I needed ideas, and fast. "You mean this one?" he asked, holding up the book, incredulously. "The Joy of Twins?" We exploded with laughter, and despite our exhaustion, tried to soothe the newest members of our family.

—Annette Gulati, Round Rock, Tex.

New SIDS recommendations

Just last month, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a couple of new recommendations to help parents avoid SIDS, a leading cause of death among babies less than a year old. Here's the latest:

- Infants should sleep in their parents' room, but in their own crib or bed.
- Infants should always sleep on their backs. The AAP now adds: "No cheating and letting them sleep on their sides—that carries a higher risk of SIDS, too."
- If a pacifier is going to be used, offer it once breastfeeding is well-established, about one month of age. If the pacifier is used when placing the infant down to sleep, don't reininsert it once the infant falls asleep.
- Avoid using various sleep-positioning devices.



Shawn (left) and Evan Dermer at 8 months. Evan passed away from SIDS less than one month after this picture was taken.

Baby foods

When can my babies eat the foods we eat?

Oranges	9 months, cut in small pcs	Strawberries	1 year
Fish	8 months	Corn	2 years
Shellfish	2 years (test with small amounts first)	Cheese	6 months
Red meat	8 months, tiny pieces	Honey	1 year
Berries	9 months, cut into pieces, except strawberries	Raisins	2 years, with supervision
		Popcorn	2 years, with supervision
		Spicy food	3 years
		Cow's milk	1 year

Does swaddling work?

Swaddling is an ancient practice for soothing infants. Now there's even more proof it works. The Journal of Pediatrics, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, published a study that clearly documented what tradition has shown for centuries: Swaddling increases baby sleep "efficiency", diminishes excessive crying, helps babies sleep through noises and wake less frequently, and helps babies return to sleep more comfortably when they do awaken. These findings are especially helpful because swaddled babies sleep on their backs, which also prevents SIDS; parents now may be less likely to place their crying babies on their stomachs to soothe them.

Healthy House Pets

Pets are important to our emotional well-being, and help teach children friendship and responsibility. But pets frequently harbor parasites and sometimes they bring diseases that can be especially harmful to young children. If you have pets or give a pet to your kids for the holidays, you should know about these risks.

- Parasites can cause Visceral Larval Migrans if larval parasites get into the human body. Watch for any severe rash on your children's skin; it might be from exposure to larval worms. Immature worms get onto our bodies from contact with pets' droppings. This is why washing hands is important after handling pets and running fingers through their fur. **Best prevention:** Deworm your pet frequently.

- Giardia is a protozoan parasite picked up when you ingest contaminated animal fecal material, typically in water or food. But it can come from hands, too. It shows up as severe diarrhea, and sometimes vomiting.

Best prevention: Have your dog or cat vaccinated against giardia.

- Fleas and ticks: Fleas bite people as well as dogs and cats. They can be a real nuisance. Ticks are more dangerous and can spread serious diseases. Over-the-counter flea treatments from the store might be effective, but some have side effects and low kill rates. Some older insecticides can be dangerous to humans or toxic if ingested. **Best prevention:** See your vet for prescription flea/tick treatments that are safe around children.

- Rabies most often comes from a bite by an infected animal, and is spread by the saliva of an infected animal to an uninfected animal or human. Even house cats can develop rabies, if they come in contact with bats that might be indoors. **Best prevention:** Rabies vaccination for all pets, including horses.

—Jonathan Woodman,
Veterinarian and Dad of B/G twins
Hampton, MN

MAGIC PUMPKINS



ast autumn, my 3-year-old twins Danny and Patrick celebrated the season by carving a jack o' lantern on our front porch with me. We had just finished reading about Johnny Appleseed, so Danny and Patrick took the leftover pulp and said, "We're going to plant these pumpkin seeds!"

I explained we should dry out the seed, and put them in the ground in the spring, but they insisted we plant them right now. Before I knew it, they had planted a dozen or so seeds in my front flower bed. I laughed at their foolishness while they declared, "We'll be growing our own pumpkins soon."

Spring arrived and I noticed a peculiar plant growing in my flower bed, recognizing it immediately as a pumpkin plant. The boys were so excited. They watered. And watered. And watered. This plant got so much water it grew to enormous proportions. It covered all my flowers and shrubs. All this, from one pumpkin seed.

Only one problem: It flowered but didn't produce any fruit. I'm no expert, but I thought all the flowers were supposed to produce pumpkins. Instead, they died and fell off the vine. I thought, "Great, I have a mutant pumpkin patch growing in my yard!" My husband and I were getting nervous, but the boys were unconcerned, certain their plant would bear numerous pumpkins by Halloween.

I should have trusted in the blind faith of my children. This plant finally produced. By October, we had two large pumpkins on the vine, which they proudly carved with happy faces.

We learned important lessons: Too often adults are blinded by cynicism. The confidence of youth and innocence prevails.

Do yourself and your family a favor. Do something foolish. Plant a pumpkin seed in your front yard today.

—Susan Renner, Milford, Ohio

The Bone Bank

Your twins need to make regular deposits in their "Bone Banks" so that as adolescents and adults their bones will be adequate for regular withdrawals. It helps to think of bones as being like bank accounts, says Frank Franklin, M.D., at the University of Alabama. You and your twins need to think of a daily calcium quotient that has to be deposited in each child's bone bank every day. To remember this more easily, think green-and-white. Leafy green vegetables are like "money in the bank."

Kids between 1 and 3 years need a minimum of 500 mg. of calcium each day. Kids 4 to 8 need at least 800 mg. a day. How much calcium in helpings of food?

- 1 cup of milk = 300 mg.
- 1½ oz. of cheese = 300 mg.
- 1 cup cooked broccoli or turnip greens = 250 mg.
- 8 oz. yogurt = 300+ mg.
- 1 cup cooked collard greens = 300 mg.
- 3 oz. canned sardines with bones = 300 mg.



Tatem and Cullen, Dublin, California

PARENT IS A VERB, NOT A NOUN

We see a lot of the damage done by wimpy parents on shows like "Nanny 911" and "Brat Camp" as the tough-as-nails caregivers are called in to set things straight. A new book by Betsy Hart, widely-read syndicated columnist and Mommy Coach who writes "From the Hart", discusses the consequences of having parents fail to set limits, enforce them, and help their children with what Hart defines as the Three D's of parental love: discipline, disappointment and development. She decries in her provocative book the tenets of the "parenting culture" that has grown up around thousands of "experts" who insist

that a child's self-esteem is paramount and that "No" is a bad word.

"With four children, I know all about the parenting culture. So many mothers and fathers believe they must make sure their kids always feel special and really good about themselves, even when they're behaving very badly. Parents are terrified of overlooking a need or bruising a delicate psyche. Heaven forbid our kids should ever suffer disappointment, irritation or frustration," Hart declares.

Hart slices, dices and, indeed, purees the concepts of permissive parenting. She urges parents to be strong leaders and guides for their children. Parents are raving about this book.

—*It Takes A Parent: How the Culture of Parenting is Hurting Our Kids—and What To Do About It* (Putnam)

Learning to save

Some families keep a coin jug in the kitchen and throw all of their spare change into it every day. Once a month or so, the contents of jug are taken to the bank for tallying. Half the money is deposited into savings accounts belonging to each child, and the other half is spent for a pizza, swimming at the local pool, or an ice cream cone. This is a fun way to teach children to save. When grandparents or relatives give a gift of money to your twins, teach them to save at least half in their savings accounts, and set aside the other half for "something special" later on. Deferring gratification can be taught...it is a habit that will serve your twins well as adolescents and adults.

—Idea from Laura, Mom of twins
Crystal Lake, Ill

Children shouldn't fear strangers



Lee Grotte, M.D., a physician in private practice in Cleveland, Ohio, believes parents help create a climate of fear in their children when they lecture their kids to avoid talking to strangers, no matter what. He told attendees at a recent African Medicine Festival in New York that it helps relieve stress and encourage personal health if people develop a natural trusting relationship with other humans. "I believe it is safer to actually teach children the communication skills that will help them spot and avoid trouble before it begins," said Grotte. "We need to find new ways to establish trust between ourselves, not build a wall of fright."

Fear isolates and alienates people, Grotte believes, and often leads to changes in body chemistry that contribute to disease. Children pick up on their parents' fearfulness.

With small children, "let them watch you interact with strangers. They will learn to be comfortable by learning from you. Talk with them about how to notice when a stranger is taking an unusual or fixed interest in them, and what to do. Children have very good instincts about most people. They are nimble and quick and can usually note danger and escape effectively if they are not surprised or paralyzed with fear. Talk to your children frankly about the need to avoid some situations, but try to give them confidence rather than scare them," Grotte urged.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

I have boy/girl twins. My daughter has always been the more difficult, stubborn of the pair; my son is more quiet, laid back. We opted to split them into two classes in preschool. It was tough at first until he realized he could make friends and speak on his own without her finishing his sentences and making decisions for him. Before long, I found myself in Kindergarten orientation.

Once again we opted to keep them separate. Both teachers had teaching styles that complemented my children's individual personalities. With seven sets of twins in this kindergarten, the teachers surely had their hands full!

My son's teacher used "Reward Dollars" as an incentive for good behavior in class. Parents were asked to donate little toys and gifts the kids could "buy" with their earnings. Soon I saw bouncy balls and matchbox cars coming home in the backpack. Then it stopped. Without thinking much about it, I assumed the program had ended.

One chilly afternoon at pick-up time, the teacher opened the door for dismissal and had a tear in her eye. She looked straight at me. As I approached her, my son raced past me to the exit door of my daughter's class. He screamed his sister's name and ran towards the room, and she ran towards him. He proudly handed his sister a beautiful Kelly Barbie doll.

It was the most expensive item at the Rewards Store and he'd been saving his earnings for a month to buy this for his sister. He knew she really wanted one and didn't have one of her own. No one told him to do it. He did it all by himself.

—Pam Heestand
Canton, Mich.

How to talk about DISASTERS

Helping your twins grow to healthy and responsible adults isn't always easy, especially when it comes to managing feelings and explaining the ins and outs of disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis, terrorist attacks, and other events that are constantly in the news. When your kids feel sad, helpless and fearful, acknowledge that their feelings are normal and valid. Give your children extra time and attention at times of crisis. Encourage discussion, but don't beat the horse to death. Be honest, if asked, about how you



Couch potatoes no more

Help your kids and your whole family cut down on TV time. Enlist your twins in a project to help you "plan" when the TV will be on, and when it gets turned off.

1. Make a list of things you would rather do than watch TV (computer and video games not allowed.) Think creatively...look at the stars, visit the library, make decorations for the next holiday, etc. Tape your list to your television set as a reminder.
2. Track each family member's TV watching time for one week. Write it down. Have the twins help keep a journal.
3. Schedule two shows per week per twin that are allowed. Enforce the limits. Eliminate all channel-surfing.
4. Try going for a whole day at a time without having the TV on at all.
5. Make "No TV" into a game. Set up a weekly bet with your twins that they can't cut back their TV watching to one hour a week. The prize: Money (say, \$5 for each one) or a special outing as a reward.

feel. Try to stay calm...you are the role model. Be alert for anxiety, aggressive behavior or such ailments as stomach aches or headaches that make your twins want to stay home from school. Try to maintain their normal routine, and get them outside playing as much as possible. Physical activity is healthy. To allay a feeling of helplessness, offer your assistance as a family, with donations of food, clothing or money. There are numerous avenues through which you can offer assistance. Be sure to reserve family time for meals together, or game night (with no TV).

Double Takes

:: "I just >>
love the
holidays,
don't you?"
("Is that
my toy?")



Boy/girl twins are (almost) always dizygotic (DZ, "fraternal"). Can you guess whether the same-sex multiples pictured on these pages are monozygotic (MZ, "identical") or dizygotic?

1:: Jayla and Janay
8½ months
Pleasantville, New Jersey



2:: Allison and Rotella
14 months
Youngstown, New York

3:: Analise and Marcus
24 months
Sewell, New Jersey

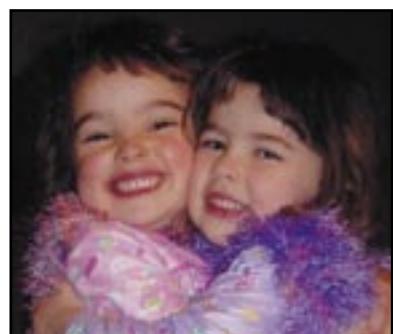
4:: Andrew and Alex
12 months
Oakland, California



5:: Ben and Sam
3 years
Red Deer, AB Canada

6:: Calista and Caitlin
2 years
Phoenix, Arizona

7:: Evan and Owen
8 months
North East, Pennsylvania



8:: Hunter and Zoe
6 months
Clovis, California

9:: Ian and Justin
7 months
Miami, Florida

10:: Janessa and Jordanna
4 years
Whitesboro, New York



11:: John and Marc
3½ years
Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota



12:: Justin and Megan
2½ years
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



13:: Luke and Liam
5½ months
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



14:: Kaitlyn and Nicholas
9 months
Ramsey, New Jersey



15:: Mia and Moriah
2 years
Fairmont, West Virginia



16:: Morgan and Raegan
3 years
El Centro, California



17:: Patrick and David
4 years
Caledonia, Michigan



18:: Rylee and Isabelle
4 months
Hilo, Hawaii



19:: Tanner & Lange
2 years
Bend, Oregon



20:: Ashley and Isley
4 months
Graham, North Carolina

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Photo Tips

What we are looking for:

- Sharp focus
- Crisp, clean, vivid color (no blue or yellow cast)
- Good, attractive lighting (no high shadow contrasts, no "red eye")
- Uncluttered backgrounds
- Happy children interacting with each other

We select photos for an upcoming issue three months prior to its distribution. Because of the volume of photos received, we are unable to respond individually. If your photo is selected and you have not included a release form with it you will be contacted to sign a photo release. See Release Form on page 45 of this issue.

Please be sure to:

- Place your address label on the back of the photo (or write softly with permanent ink pen) along with a phone number.
- Include the names of the children, their age in the photo and their twin type (dizygotic, monozygotic or unknown).

Send your twins' photograph to:

TWINS Double Takes
Attn. Art Director
11211 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 101
Centennial, CO 80112-3851

NOTE: We are unable to use any professional photographs. Photos will not be returned. All photos become the property of TWINS.

17 - DZ	18 - MZ	19 - UNK	20 - MZ
13 - UNK	14 - DZ	15 - UNK	16 - DZ
9 - MZ	10 - INK	11 - DZ	12 - DZ
5 - MZ	6 - DZ	7 - MZ	8 - DZ
1 - MZ	2 - UNK	3 - DZ	4 - MZ

Based on parental reports:

HAPPY endings

Precocious girlie talk: 2 going on 20

I don't know how many of you are Nascar fans, but there is a commercial with Dale Unser Jr. (driver of the Budweiser #8) showing him in his Wrangler jeans. My 2½-year-old granddaughter Kristian saw that commercial and when a picture came on the screen showing Jr.'s rear end, she commented "Junior, cute butt." I about fell off the couch. I tried not to let her see me act shocked. I thought it was a fluke but when her Papa and Mommy came in the living room later, the same commercial came on and she said it again. "Where did she get that from?", my daughter wondered. Her Papa said she probably overheard her racing Uma say it. I'm not a Jr. fan, just a pure Rusty fan, so if that had been Rusty's rear I might have understood the comment....I have to keep reminding myself that little ones have radar hearing.

Anne
via e-mail

Getting curious!

The other day I was leaning over to change my 3-month-old son's diaper and my twins were watching attentively! Hailey pointed at my chest as I was leaning over and commented that she was going to get 'those' when she got bigger like Mommy. I explained to her that, yes, when she got big she would get those as well. She then again pointed at my cleavage and said, "And I'm going to get that, too, right mommy?" I asked her, "Well, what's that honey?" She said, in the most innocent way, "Your tummy butt." I couldn't stop laughing. That'll be one for the wedding stories!

Sheena
mom of ID girls born 5/8/02
via e-mail

Chalk it up...

So my 2-year-old twin girls love sidewalk chalk...We were walking through the grocery store maybe two months ago and we passed the arts and crafts items for children, such as chalk. The girls started screaming at the top of their lungs "Cock, cock." I was like... uhhhhh. I so did *not* teach them that. Oh, the looks people gave us were priceless. An embarrassing mommy moment.

Denverduo
Parker, Colo.
TWINS Message Board

Growing up

I feel very close to my daughter's twin boys, having helped raise them from infancy. Now that they are teens and living far away, we visit by phone. The boys are good kids, but 13 is an unlovely age. Sometimes I'm called upon to counsel one or the other on schoolwork, housekeeping or behavior. (Their mother thinks they tend to listen better to me, perhaps because of the distance between us.)

One evening my daughter called, distraught over their school situation and their disrespectful attitudes. Seeking to reassure her, I said, "Remember, honey, they won't be 13 forever."

"But mother," she moaned, "that's what you said when they were 3!"

Jeane Gottsponer
Yuma, AZ

Do you have a short, funny anecdote about your twins? E-mail your funny anecdote to twins.editor@businessword.com. Please type "cutest things" in the subject line. We will publish selected submissions in upcoming issues.

Twin Vision



By Brian and Brad Jones

PERSONALIZED STORY BOOKS

Each twin “owns” personal attributes that make up his or her unique personality and story. These **personalized story books for twins** help each twin understand what it means to be an “I” and not just “one of the twins.”

These personal stories for each of your twins will **help your child to learn to talk to you about important subjects.** Create the foundation for open communication with each twin that will last a lifetime.

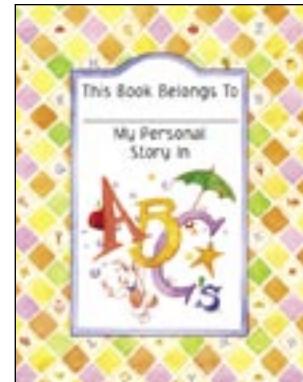
To find out what is important to your children **discuss the fill-in sections of these books** with each twin. This is your chance to allow your children to ask questions and gain quality time with each twin, away from the TV and computer games. **You'll be amazed at what you will learn about how your twins think** as you reinforce your special bond with them.

Start when your twins are babies. Help them develop their own personal stories. Many of the 32 pages in each colorful book have **fill-in-the-blank spaces for a child's personal preferences and individual information.**

From the time your twins are infants, they will love having their personal stories read to them. **Before long, they'll be reading** the stories back to you, and to each other!

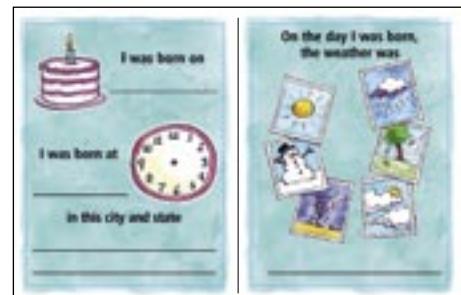
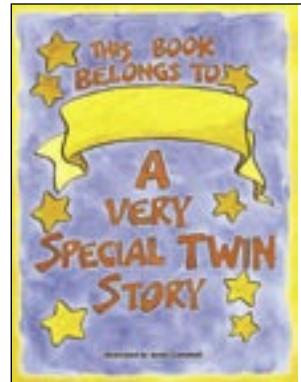
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A Very Special Twin Story

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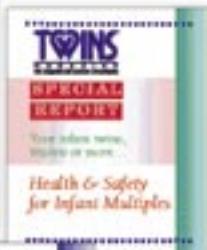
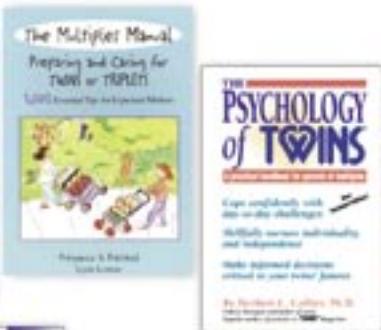
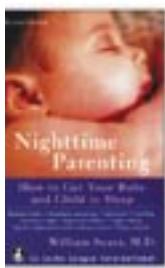
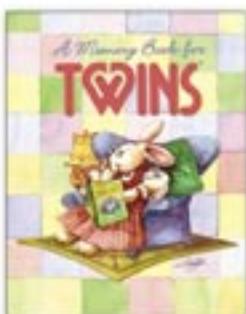
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