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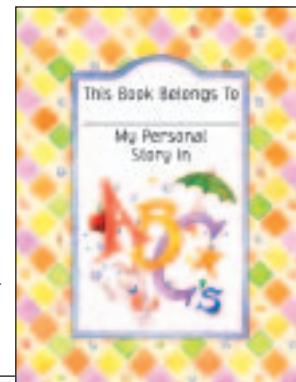
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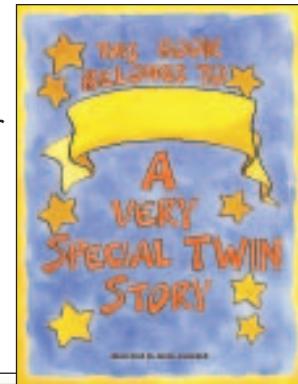
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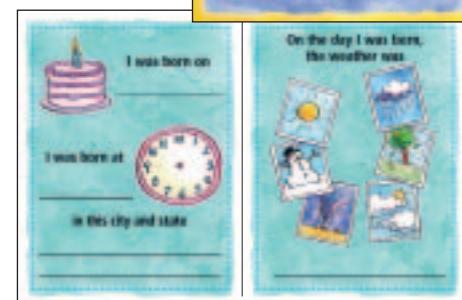
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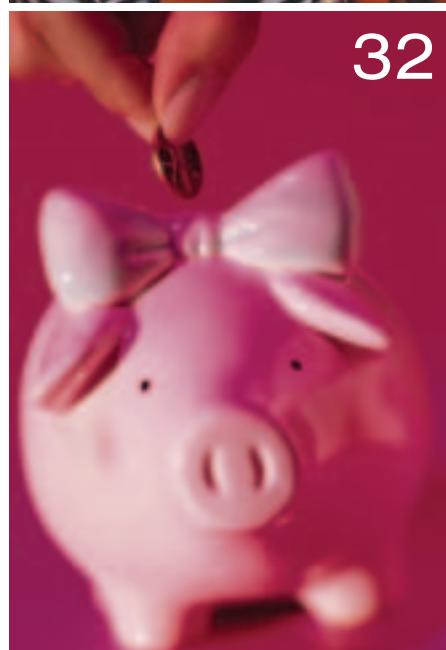
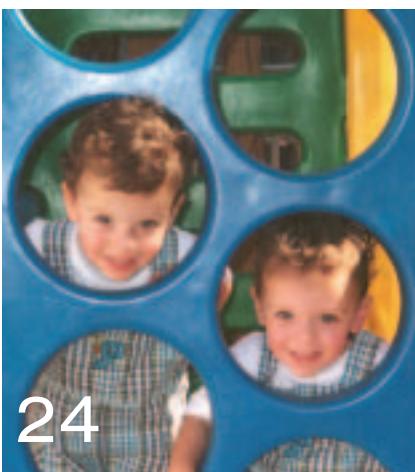


Christian and Christopher Speller, 3, from Denver, Colo., are dizygotic twins with big smiles and big hearts. Both love their older sister Tyler. All-American boys, Christian is fascinated with cars and Christopher loves playing and watching sports.

Cover Photography by Bernard Grant

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Time flies. It seems it was only yesterday we were talking about the millennium. As I grow older—yes, sooner or later, it happens to us all, but still I wonder, how did it happen so fast?—I've decided that making time count is what counts. And then I have to ask, what makes time count? Is it how many tasks you can cram into a day? Is the number of books you publish or finding a cure for the common cold. Worthy achievements, no doubt. Or is it the small moments, the memories you create with your kids? Of course, we all would answer that it is the small moments. But it is so tough to not let the important yet mundane things edge out what seem like the "extras," which actually are the essential matters, the things that make life count. This struggle to get priorities in order can weigh us down.

Maybe this conflict is part of what drives us to make New Year's resolutions. Welcome to our New-Year's-resolutions-get-your-life-in-order issue. We hope this issue can help you make time for your twins. In fact, that's the title of our article on organizing your home and life, written by a mother of two sets of twins. A father of twins and a certified financial planner presents an overview of family finances and offers to do a free financial analysis for three TWINS Magazine families. And, the issue would not be complete if we didn't touch on the queen of New Year's resolutions diet and exercise—specifically how to get rid of twin skin.

On top of all this, we've packed in more features than ever. You'll find stories about a bone marrow transplant between monozygotic twin boys, the "twin advantage" and a "Special Miracles" story and song from the lead singer of Orleans.

I need to end this letter with an apology. In our November/December issue we published a recipe for gingerbread men. Not that this is an excuse, but our computers must have crashed at least five times a day for the last week or so of production. In the process, the fractions in the recipe became corrupted and, although we thought we had fixed all the errors, we missed the amount for the ingredient of cinnamon. We published "24 teaspoons cinnamon." Wrong! It should have read "2½ teaspoons cinnamon." I am very sorry for this error and want to thank those alert readers who sent e-mails pointing out our error. We immediately published the correct recipe on our Web site. Thanks for your understanding.

Happy New Year!

Sharon Withers
Managing Editor

TWINS tip: Teach your twins to think of each other on their birthdays by making sure they give each other thoughtful gifts. This can also reminds them how special it is to share a life with someone.

Do you know...



TTTS survivors Ruby and Peri Silverman of Greenwood Village, Colo., now 12 months old, finish their first 5K with their dad Ari. Twins and more twins turned out to support the TTTS Race for Hope. Read all about it on page 7.

...

- Half of all multiple births today are born to women 30 and older, twice as many as in 1980.
- Three times as many women 35 and older, and four times as many women 40 and older are having twins today compared to 1980.
- Five times as many women 35 and older, and 10 times as many 40 and older are having triplets or quads today compared to 1980.

—www.drbarbaraluke.com

Visit Dr. Luke's site and take a quiz testing your knowledge of multiple pregnancy.

...

- Between 2001 and 2002, the death rate dropped significantly for triplet births, from 71.4 to 60.1.

More birth statistics from the Centers for Disease Control are on page 8.

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Nightmares disrupt sleep

A reader writes:

My twin boys were sleeping fine and then a nightmare about spiders one night changed everything for one of the boys. Every night is now a huge struggle to get him to go to sleep and he upsets his brother.

Our readers respond:

We just went through the same thing recently with our 3-year-old twin boys. Having never had any real sleep issues, my first reaction was to bring the child who was upset into our bed until he fell back to sleep. After that, he kept asking to sleep in mommy's bed when he would wake up. My suggestion to you would be to put a toddler bed in your room for the child who is sleeping well and deal with the child who's upset in his room one-on-one until the pattern changes. At least you won't have two cranky children in the morning!

Jill P.

Nanuet, N.Y.

This suggestion works as well for twins as for singletons. Create a new bedtime ritual of eradicating whatever is causing the problem—be it spiders, snakes or alligators. Use a spray can of air freshener and make a label stating what you are spraying for—for example, "Spider Killer." Before getting into bed, look under it and spray, check the closets and spray, in the bed and spray... wherever your son thinks spiders might be hiding. The scent reminds them that the problem has been fixed, and by having them participate in this ritual they will gain a sense of control over their fears.

Lynne Marden, R.N., C.C.E. Perinatal Educator
via e-mail

For March/April

A reader writes: I bought toddler beds for my 2-year-old boys. What a mistake. Every night they go wild, playing and trashing their room. They won't get in bed, stay there and go to sleep. Help!

E-mail your replies to twins.editor@businessword.com; please type "Family Talk" in the subject line. Or, post replies in the Family Talk forum on the TWINS message board at www.TwinsMagazine.com.

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mailbox

Healthy weight gain

I was happy to read "A Revolution in Maternal Nutrition" (November/December). While a registered dietitian in a large medical center with a fertility program, I treated moms pregnant with multiples. I also am the mother of 2-year-old boy/girl twins.

In my clinical experience, the standard recommendations for caloric intake and weight gain in twin pregnancies seemed inadequate. I researched the basis for these recommendations but found only a very limited number of studies and they were not wholly convincing.

In my clinical observations, mothers who gained more weight earlier and consistently had longer pregnancies and bigger, healthier babies than those who did not. It was confusing to see positive outcomes in patients who limited their weight gain. The only time I saw excess weight gain related to serious problems was in women with pregnancy-induced hypertension.

During my first pregnancy, I gained 50 pounds on my 125-pound frame and gave birth at 42 weeks to a baby under 8 pounds. I lost all the weight while breastfeeding the first year. Ten months after my son was born, I became pregnant with twins. Again I allowed myself to eat nutritiously, according to my appetite. During this time, I was fortunate to come across Dr. Luke's book, *When You're Expecting Twins, Triplets or Quads*, which explained and clarified all I had previously read about and seen in my experience with multiple pregnancies. Despite my doctor's gentle admonitions to slow my weight gain during my twin pregnancy, I felt confident that gaining the 75 pounds I did would not harm my babies or me. I carried my babies to full term and they were perfectly healthy. I returned to my usual weight within six months of delivery (and with breastfeeding). I can't help but think that a healthy diet and adequate weight gain played a large part in the outcome of my pregnancy. Thanks, Dr. Luke!

Angela Bruce
San Diego, Calif.

TTTS survivors

I believe we are the treatment failure couple cited by Dr. Crombleholme in the TWINS Magazine article "TTTS: What do we know?" (November/December). Our TTTS survivors, Joshua and Evan, were born Nov. 6, 2002. We also have two older children, William and Brittney. Read our story at <http://ttts.8k.com/ridgeaway.htm>.

While it was an interesting article, as well as factual and accurate, I was looking for a mention of the work of Dr. Julian De Lia and of Dr. Ruben Quintero. They are recognized the world over for their efforts in finding a solution to this dreaded syndrome. Of special interest would have been Dr. De Lia's findings concerning protein anemia and recommendations for sipping Boost or Ensure. I realize there is only so much space in a publication. To overlook or not mention these two doctors as well as the www.tttsfoundation.org would be considered by many informed readers a serious omission. I agree with Dr. Crombleholme that more study will benefit future moms and dads facing TTTS. While it is attractive to look at the TTTS [Eurofeotus] study stats and think of one type of surgical technique as the solution, it is important to recognize proper diagnosis and alternative remedial courses of action as well. There is hope. The right combination of surgery matching a specific TTTS condition should be considered. Thank you for contributing to TTTS awareness and a better understanding.

William Ridgway
via e-mail

Editor's Note: The article focused on the two studies. Although we did mention doctors DeLia and Quintero, as well as the TTTS Foundation—and they all were included in our resources list—we plan to cover the work of these two doctors in detail in future issues. Thank you for reinforcing one of the article's points: matching the treatment to each case is critical.

TWINS Magazine has set up a new Web page and a new Message Board forum for TTTS parents. We hope you, and many other TTTS parents, will post your stories on the forum. Visit www.TwinsMagazine.com. ♦



After completion of the 5K, the 1-mile family fun run takes off at the Littleton Adventist Hospital TTTS Race for Hope Nov. 14 in Denver. TWINS Magazine was a supporting sponsor.

Race posts big win for TTTS families

The inaugural 5K TTTS Race for Hope held Nov. 14 in Denver was a great success—by any measure, length or distance. The race raised close to \$20,000 for the Florida Institute of Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy (FIFDiT) and the TTTS Foundation—almost unheard of for first year events that typically do well to break even. It drew about 400 supporters and participants. Organizer Lonnie Somers said the event, above all, achieved its main goal of raising awareness: The three local network news programs gave extensive coverage to the race and to TTTS.



Organizers Lonnie and Michelle Somers hold their twins Ashley and Aspen while they visit with Dr. Reuben Quintero from the Florida Institute of Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy. Dr. Quintero performed laser surgery on Ashley and Aspen.

"Nationally our press releases got picked up in so many cities, from Albany to Seattle," Lonnie said. "When some supporters who work at hospitals returned to work after the race, they were surprised to learn how many co-workers who had never heard of TTTS had become aware of it through our publicity. Even families who had dealt with TTTS said they were not aware of how widespread TTTS is."



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Twin sisters on the right won the post-race Naked Juice-drinking contest.

Next year's Denver event, slated for Nov. 13, may be just one of several TTTS Race for Hope events. Lonnie plans to take the race national. "We will definitely be in Cleveland next year and it also looks like we'll be in the Tampa or Orlando area. And we are hoping to bring the Race for Hope to Charlotte, N.C."



Ben and Jennifer Wright of Denver hold their 18-month-old girls, Savannah and Olivia, TTTS survivors.

If you missed the opportunity to donate to TTTS Race for Hope you still can support the TTTS Foundation and the FIFDiT. Visit www.ttsraceforhope.org for more information.

Study will track IVF children

The American Fertility Association in partnership with the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization, is launching "Footprints: The IVF Children's Health Study," the first longitudinal, prospective and scientifically objective study that chronicles the health and wel-

fare of children conceived through IVF. The study will be conducted in collaboration with leading reproductive endocrinologists.

At least 250,000 IVF children have been born in the U.S. The study will track multiple gestations, birth weight, birth defects, surgical procedures, physical health and developmental milestones of IVF children.

"It is appropriate for this study to be a patient-driven initiative," said Pamela Madsen, executive director and founder of the American Fertility Association. "Patients have no professional bias, so having a patient-driven study avoids potential conflict of interest from a medical- or industry-led initiative."

"'Footprints' will provide patients trying to conceive, IVF parents and their children, physicians and industry with important information about the health of IVF children," said Owen Davis, M.D., AFA medical director and associate director of the Center for Reproductive Medicine and Infertility at Cornell University.

"'Footprints' is a bold first step and, as an IVF mother, this is the best gift I could ever give to my children," Madsen added.

Visit www.theafa.org for more information.

Birth by the numbers

The Centers for Disease Control has released a series of new birth publications that paint a picture of birth trends in the U.S. Check out a few of the findings here, or go to www.cdc.gov/nchs for details.

- Preliminary birth data for 2003 indicate



Amy and Tom Morris, organizers of the Twin to Twin 5K benefit race in Charlotte, N.C., flew to Denver to support the Race for Hope, where they were able to visit briefly with Dr. Quintero who performed surgery on their twins Joseph and John.

that the birth rate for women 40 through 44 rose 5% between 2002 and 2003, from 8.3 to 8.7 births per 1,000 women, while the rate for women 45 through 54 remained unchanged at 0.5.

- For the first time, births to women over 40 topped 100,000 in a single year (2003).
- Birth rates for women 30 through 34 increased by 4% from 2002 to 2003, while the rate for women 35 through 39 rose 6%.
- The Caesarean delivery rate rose for the seventh straight year: 27.6% of all births in 2003 were Caesarean deliveries, a 6% increase from 2002.
- The percent of babies born preterm (less than 37 weeks of gestation) rose from 12.1 in 2002 to 12.3 in 2003, continuing the steady increase started in the mid-1990s.
- The percent of babies born at low birth weight (under 2,500 grams) rose slightly from 7.8% in 2002 to 7.9% in 2003. Low birth weight has gradually increased since the mid-1980s.
- The U.S. infant mortality rate increased from 6.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 7.0 in 2002.
- Between 2001 and 2002, death rates increased 5% for low birth weight and 14% for maternal complications.
- The three leading causes of infant death—congenital malformations, low birthweight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)—accounted for 45% of all infant deaths. ♦

The Twin Team

Written by Sandi S. McLaughlin

Under the dim moonlight while
the crickets made noise,
It was bedtime again for two little boys.

Rhett and Ashton were twins who
did not like to sleep,
And when it was bedtime—oh,
they would weep.

"Please mom," they'd plead,
"three more minutes or four.
We want to stay up.
We want to play more."

"We're scared of the dark and of noises we hear.
We're scared of the monsters here," Rhett said, shaking with fear.

"Now boys," said their mom, "you know it's OK.
There are no monsters here. Believe what I say."

But the twins were afraid and did not want to be,
Alone in the dark where they barely could see.

"Now listen," said their mom, "I have an idea
that's sure to erase even your worst bedtime fear.

"The next time you hear a noise or have a bad dream,
remember you're twins and twins are a team.

"Together you guys have the power, strength and might
To scare off all monsters that come in the night."

The boys thought for a moment and looked at each other.
Then Ashton winked at Rhett, and they smiled at their mother.

"We'll keep our flashlights and toy swords by the side of our bed.
If monsters come along, we'll just whack them on the head!"

"That's right!" added Rhett. "We have nothing to fear.
Beware all you monsters! The twin team is here!"

Then into their beds climbed the brave little boys.
With their lights and swords ready, they listened for noise.

And just when they heard a loud bump or a strange creak,
They turned on their flashlights and took a quick peek.

"There's nothing here," whispered Ashton to Rhett.
"The monster ran away 'cause he's scared of us, I bet."

The twin team worked together the rest of the night.
Each helped the other get rid of his fright.

And from that time on, when the crickets made noise
As bedtime arrived for the two little boys,

They climbed into bed without even a peep
And with flashlights and swords, they fell fast asleep.



ILLUSTRATION BY JERIANNE VAN DIJK

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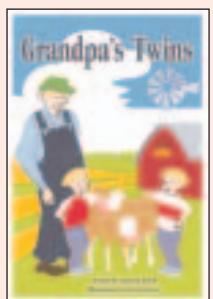
The boys of Twin Team fight
together to battle bedtime
fears. By Sandi S.
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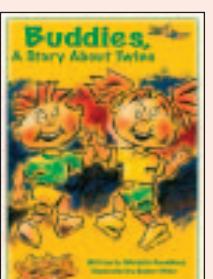
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The Zygosity Puzzle

by Lisa Crystal

A multiple mystery

One memorable day six years ago, at my routine 18-week ultrasound, my husband and I received the shock of our lives: the surreal vision of twin boys floating on the ultrasound monitor. When the technician withdrew the smelling salts I wondered aloud, "Are they identical or fraternal?" Left unspoken was a related thought: How did this happen? I was dimly aware of the differences between the twin types—I knew that dyzygotic twins ("fraternal") came from two fertilized eggs while monozygotic ("identical") twins developed from a single egg—and thought that if I knew what kind of twins they were, this would help explain how they had "happened."

The technician peered at the screen. "Hmmm, hard to say," she said. "The membrane between them looks pretty thin. They could have a single placenta, or separate placentas that have fused together. Maybe next time we can get a better look."

The next time came and went, as did the subsequent dozen or so ultrasounds, and placenta-wise, the picture never became much clearer. We did, however, get many good images of the babies' heads, and even in the fetal stage they looked different. Baby A's forehead seemed flatter than Baby B's, and his facial proportions thinner. One memorable series of images revealed somewhat different profiles. Fraternal, we thought.

Indeed, when Graham and Ian were finally born at 39 weeks they looked remarkably different. Graham had a thatch of dark hair on his head, while Ian was cov-

ered in blonde down. We had no trouble telling them apart. Yet, their identical blood types and the strikingly similar shape and expression of their eyes left me with a nagging doubt, which only intensified when a nurse came to my room to conduct the babies' hospital discharge exam. After he'd poked and prodded them a bit he held both naked babies, one in each arm, back sides facing me. "Sacral dimples," he said, nodding at a crease at the base of each baby's spine, above the buttocks. "Usually harmless, and only happens in about 2% of the population. I'd lay bets they're identical."

That settled it—for about a week, until I went to my first postpartum exam with my obstetrician. "Were you able to tell anything from the placentas?" I asked.

She flipped through my file. "The placentas were separate," she said. "Your twins are probably fraternal." And before I could speak she scurried out to her next patient.

Over the next month or so I researched this issue. In fact, I became obsessed with being able to answer with confidence the question posed by relatives and strangers alike: "Are they identical?"

When I read that one-third of identical twins actually do have separate placentas—the result of an "early split" of the fertilized egg (zygote)—I was further perplexed, as well as annoyed that my doctor had all but dismissed the "identical" possibility. As I fed and diapered my sons I inspected hair whorls and palm creases, in search of a clue that would unlock the mystery of their origin, but did not get any

closer to an answer. Sometimes, when the babies gazed up at me as I held their bottles, I could swear that on some level they knew the truth and were having their fun with me—the first and most profound example of what I imagined would be a life-time of conspiratorial mischief.

One day, while flipping through a TWINS Magazine, I saw an ad for zygosity testing and decided to settle the matter once and for all. I sent my \$100 to a lab and, as promised, received a kit in the mail. I swabbed the inside of each 2-month-old baby's cheek with the brush wands and tucked the wands into the postage-paid envelope. All that was left to do was wait three long weeks for an answer.

In the meantime, Graham lost some of his dark hair, and Ian's peach fuzz disappeared, to be replaced with darker strands. Both were diagnosed with reflux, and when one cried in their bedroom I had no idea who it was until I entered the room.

Despite their growing physical resemblance, distinct personalities were emerging. Ian was an acute and somewhat aloof observer, content to watch the goings-on, while his super-cuddly brother demanded, and received, extra rocking and pacing.

Finally the letter from the lab arrived. For a fleeting moment I thought about placing it, sealed, in a memory album, to be opened at a significant milestone—the boys' 18th birthday perhaps. Then I regained my wits and tore it open. It revealed a greater than 99% chance that Graham and Ian were monozygotic, or



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identical. The typed report went into some detail about the six DNA sequences that were compared between the two boys, explaining how it is "rare for two related people to have all six 'marker' regions show the same pattern. Even siblings look different at these sites more than 99% of the time." In sum, my boys' marker regions all matched.

This knowledge triggered a flood of relief and satisfaction. Years later, when my daughter would ask me if she was at greater risk to have twins, I could tell her that unlike fraternal twinning, identical twinning may be a random event that does not necessarily run in families. Now I knew that if one boy developed a medical condition, I must

watch for the other to develop it as well; and if one boy suffered a grievous injury the other could donate a perfectly matched organ or blood. On a lighter note, I would witness the growth of the unique bond that arises between two people who are genetically identical, yet distinctly individual.

Over the past few years I've been both amused and appalled to find that the same old myths about the biology of twinning are alive and well. Recently I read that celebrity look-alikes Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen are actually fraternal twins—at least according to their mother, who has explained to the press that, Mary-Kate's recent dye job and dramatic weight loss aside, there are bona fide physical differ-

ences between the girls such as height and expression around the eyes. What's unclear is whether she realizes that these subtle differences are common in monozygotic twins. But perhaps 18 years ago her obstetrician told her, too, that her babies had separate placentas and were "probably fraternal."

Memo to Mary-Kate and Ashley: Set the record straight and take a zygosity test. After all, what's a hundred or so bucks when you're each worth over \$100 million? ♦

Lisa Crystal is a freelance writer who lives in Newark, Calif., with her monozygotic twin boys, their older sister and her husband.

The advertisement features a photograph of two newborn babies lying side-by-side, looking slightly different. A thought bubble originates from the baby on the left, containing the question "Q: Are they identical?". Another thought bubble originates from the baby on the right, containing the answer "A: Find out with Proactive Genetics.". To the left of the babies, a text box lists the service details: "The Twin DNA Test: 99+% Test Accuracy. Results in 7-10 Business Days. Definitive DNA Zygosity Test. Easy Bloodless Swab Kit. Secure Online Ordering." The Proactive Genetics logo is at the bottom left, and the website address "www.proactivegenetics.com" is at the bottom center. The phone number "1-866-TWIN-DNA" is at the bottom right.

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The roots of aggression

Are aggressive kids born or made?

What makes kids aggressive? Do their genes launch them on their way to becoming bullies? Is their environment the key influence? These are some of the questions driving Laura Baker's current research. Twins and their families are helping her find answers.

There are 605 sets of twins and triplets and their primary caregivers in her study, the Southern California Twin Project. Baker's comprehensive approach documents each child's psycho-physiological, neurocognitive and social risk factors.

At ages 9 and 10 the children were evaluated for conduct disorders and cognitive disabilities, which may underpin problematic behavior such as ADHD and reading disabilities. Now the second wave of assessments is in progress with the kids who are 11 and 12 years old. Baker plans to follow the children at two-year intervals until they are young adults and as long as funding continues.

How much do genetics and environment affect aggressive behaviors?

Baker's team expects to find that both genetic and environmental factors influence the development of aggressive and antisocial behavior. Baker explained: "We think that genetic effects will be stronger for a subset of children who demonstrate conduct problems from an early age. As children move into adolescence, we expect that environmental influences will become more important as peers become the primary socialization group for these children. There may be subgroups of children who develop conduct problems because of inherited genetic risk factors, and others who have more environmental risk (e.g., head injury, birth complications and other adverse environments). Studying twins helps us understand how genes and environment might both influence childhood behavior."

Preliminary findings, complex answers

Although Baker's team is in the middle of data analyses from the first wave of data collection, she reports these results: different degrees of genetic influences upon proactive and reactive aggression; peer victimization is primarily influenced by the environment.

Baker explains:

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Occupation: Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Southern California

Position: Director of the Southern California Twin Project

Contact information: Mailing Address: Psychology Dept., SGM 01, USC, Los Angeles, CA 90089 •

E-mail: lbaker@usc.edu • Web site: www.rcf.usc.edu/~lbaker • Phone: (213) 740-2261

Editor's Note: Dr. Baker thanks the USC twin project staff for assistance in data collection and scoring, and the twins and their families for their participation in this research. This study was supported by a grant to Baker from NIMH (R01)

1) Childhood measures of aggression, including a measure of childhood psychopathology, do show some genetic influence... including both reactive and proactive forms of aggression. For example, kids may respond angrily or defensively to teasing or other sources of frustration (reactive aggression), or may initiate bullying and other aggressive behaviors without being provoked (proactive aggression).

MZ (identical) twins tend to be more similar to one another than DZ (fraternal) twins for both kinds of aggression in our study. This suggests that a genetic predisposition may play a role in their aggressive behaviors. Environmental influences are also important, but only a small portion of these are shared by the two twins. Much of the environmental influence on aggression is due to unique, individual experiences that affect each twin separately (such as, different peers, different relationships with parents and family members).

2) The degree of genetic influence depends on the type of aggressive behavior (reactive or proactive) and how it is measured (self-report, parent report and teacher report). Shared twin environment, for example, appears much more important in parental ratings of kids' aggression (especially proactive aggression in girls), although this may stem from a reporting bias in the parents. Parents may not be aware of or able to distinguish the two twins' behaviors very well, or may minimize actual differences between the twins.

Children's self-reported aggression and teacher reports of aggression (especially proactive forms) tend to show much more genetic influence than their parents' reports. This may stem from differences in reporting bias compared to parental reports, or may reflect real differences in aggressive behavior that show up at school but not at home. It is really important to consider both the rater and the context in which aggressive behavior is being measured.

(3) Peer victimization appears to be influenced primarily by environmental, not genetic, factors. Unlike aggressive behavior toward other children, children's experiences as victims appear to be more influenced by environment than by genetics, although these effects also differ somewhat depending on the source of information about victimization (child vs. teacher reports). Teachers also have some difficulty distinguishing between victimization and aggression in our study; they may be aware certain children are involved in behav-





Patricia M. Malmstrom, M.A.

ior problems at school, but not know clearly "who started it." Regardless of reporter, however, there is certainly a correlation between victimization and aggression: Kids who get picked on are also more aggressive in general. We are now beginning to investigate the genetic mediation of this aggression-victimization relationship in our study.

(4) Relationships between childhood conduct problems and psycho-physiological risk factors are weak at age 9 or 10. As in other studies, we do find an inverse relationship between resting heart rate (a measure of autonomic arousal) and aggressive and antisocial behavior, both in boys and girls. More highly aggressive kids have lower heart rate compared to non-aggressive kids, which may reflect a biological under-arousal that leads to sensation-seeking or impulsive behaviors. These correlations, however, are low, comparable to what has been found in other studies. We are investigating a wide range of other possible biological markers for aggression, including brain function and other physiological responses to a variety of stimuli. Results are forthcoming.

What do these results tell us about twins?

Much of what we find concerns the population in general, and is not specific to twins. Twin behavior, however, can be incredibly informative about normal and abnormal behavior in the general population, and can be helpful in resolving questions about both genetic and environmental influences. For example, we are especially interested in what environmental differences exist between MZ co-twins, which may lead to different behaviors.

One finding, however, that does relate to twins in particular concerns the sibling imitation effect we sometimes find in our gene-environment analyses. To the extent that sibling imitation occurs, it may be that one twin can "pull" the co-twin into negative behaviors for which they may be only at moderate risk. This can be especially strong for MZ pairs, since their genetic predispositions are equivalent. It may be easier to pull along a genetically identical MZ co-twin than a dissimilar DZ co-twin in some areas of behavior.

How will these findings be used?

Baker and her team hope their research on the causes of aggressive behavior will lead to more effective prediction and preventive intervention programs. As Baker put it, "The only way we can develop effective treatments is to understand the biological, genetic and social roots of the problem in the first place."

Patricia M. Malmstrom, M.A., is director of Twin Services Consulting, www.twinservices.org, and co-author of *The Art of Parenting Twins*, (Ballantine, NY, 1999). You may e-mail her at twinservices@juno.com.

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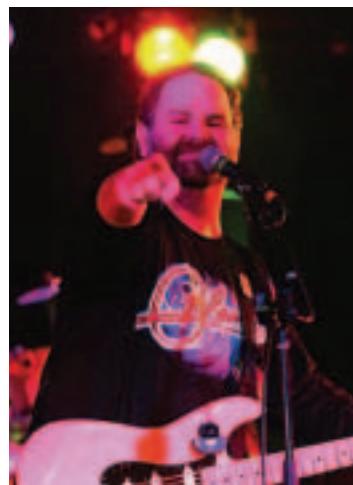
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Special Miracles

by Larry Hoppen

Our house seems like a zoo

I started to believe that my life was charmed pretty early on, as a teenager really. Now, at 53, I can say that I know it has been. Even with all the blessings that have come my way, it never ever occurred to me that it was possible, especially well past 40, that I could have two kids at once.



Larry Hoppen on stage with Orleans

About the time I was 35 I began to yearn for children. Then, in 1995, when my wife of 2½ years announced that she was expecting twins, I was incredulous—and ecstatic.

Patty and I married in late 1992 and entered a fertility program in mid-1994 at Albany Medical Center near our home in Woodstock, N.Y. There were many rounds of Clomid and Pergonal, and serious hormonal and emotional upsets. (I, too, was prescribed Clomid at one point; I

literally thought I would kill myself and demanded to stop the drug.) I have great respect for the power of those drugs and the changes they put women through.

This roller coaster ended when our pregnancy materialized in June 1995, just before we embarked on the IVF road.

"Difficult" doesn't begin to do justice to Patty's 29 weeks of pregnancy. After only four months, Patty had a surgery and absolute, strict bed rest for the remainder of her term. Lots of exams, lots of worry. Every day without incident was a victory. Finally, Patty woke me at 4:30 a.m. Sunday morning Jan. 13, 1996—Martin Luther King

weekend, during the peak of a blizzard and the day after my 45th birthday. We piled into our four-wheel drive Nissan and plowed to the local hospital where they sent her by ambulance to Albany Medical Center and its world-class NICU.

After a torturous 15-hour labor, Patty delivered Maeve and Claire by Caesarean section—three months early. They each weighed 2 pounds and were very pink. We barely got a glimpse of them as they were whisked away to the NICU. We were both elated and terrified.

All things considered, the next week was relatively smooth. I even planned to do a gig the following Sunday. Then the sky began to fall. At eight days, Maeve, our redhead kilogram gift from God, developed necrotizing gastroenterocolitis, an infection in her small intestine—gangrenous, aggressive and life threatening.

We tried to understand the situation, but it was extremely difficult; we were exhausted, frightened and didn't speak much "medical-ese." We were shattered to learn that, assuming Maeve survived a surgery, she could be at risk for anything from the urgent need for a liver transplant to a host of less compromising fates. The hospital gave us a room adjacent to the NICU to crash in during Maeve's surgery and recovery. We lived there for a week or so; never have I spent so much time on my knees. The surgery went very well. Maeve's only permanent compromise is B-12 deficiency, which is easily managed.

Maeve and Claire are true miracle children. The doctors and nurses at Albany Medical Center's NICU walk on water, as far as we are concerned. While we weren't always at our best, they certainly were.

During that four months in the NICU, Patty and I learned a lot—medically, emotionally and spiritually. We saw other parents and children who hadn't been nearly so blessed as our family and we got a front-row education about the risks of multiple births—cerebral palsy, vision and respiratory failures, and many other complications.

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The fun began when we brought Maeve and Claire home. Predictably, the routine became one big blur, especially for Patty, who was home with them 24/7/365. We were punch drunk all the time—making bottles, changing diapers, doing laundry and trying to catch some sleep or food whenever possible. And their bottles were not the same because one had a seriously abbreviated digestive system and needed special formula. It was scary, to be sure.

They did have some developmental delays, but we watched and doted as they learned to crawl, talk and walk as any other babies would. They did weird stuff, too. They discovered that they liked to excavate each other's diapers. That's what precipitated the duct-tape-as-industrial-strength fastener. They developed a non-verbal communication system that was absolutely eerie. The "twinspeak" came long before they began to speak intelligibly.

Visit www.TwinsMagazine.com, where you can listen to Larry's "Zoo" song.

Maeve and Claire got early intervention help, another huge blessing. Occupational and physical therapists came and went daily, a parade of extraordinary adults visiting and interacting with the girls, and Patty and me, too. The bonds between the early intervention teachers and our girls will last a lifetime. They welcomed our babies into the "normal" world and that is truly priceless.

I returned to traveling for gigs to make a living. As the girls approached the age of 2, things got pretty crazy around the Hoppen house and one day the muse visited me. I wrote my only blues tune ever in about 10 minutes. Sometimes the best songs come quickly; you just "pluck them from the air."



Patty, Maeve, Claire and Larry Hoppen in the NICU

"Ever Since I Had My Children, My House is Like a Zoo" received universally great response from the first time I performed it in a 1998 concert in Peekskill, N.Y. It's all true; I didn't have to make up anything to fill out the story line lyric. Kids always do stuff you can't make up, and it's always better than fiction anyway.

Now the girls are 9 and perfectly healthy, happy, bright and beautiful. We've still got animals and we've added another kitten. I remember when Maeve and Claire were 3 or 4, finally old enough to understand that I had written a song about them. They were thrilled and dubbed it "the heinie song." They loved it when I played it for friends. A couple of years ago, however, they were horrified when I included it during an impromptu set at a neighbor's barbecue. I hope that sometime in their 20s they will once again give me permission to perform "Zoo" (or "the heinie song") in their presence. ♪

Larry Hoppen is a musician, a member of the band Orleans and lead vocalist on the hit "Still the One" and other Orleans hits. In addition to being a musician and dad of twins, Larry is a partner of in a low cost, full service financial services firm (www.FamilyAdvocate.net). He lives in Orlando, Fla., with Patty, Maeve, Claire and many cats and dogs.

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MOTHER'S DAY
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the gift of life

by Joann M. Amoroso

What if the unthinkable happened? What would you do if one of your twins were diagnosed with a serious disease? How do you choose a doctor and the hospital where treatment will be provided? How do you tell your family, siblings and the child's twin? All these questions and more faced the Salomons family of Vestal, N.Y.



PHOTOS: LINDA SOLOMONS



Eric waits for surgery day.

Shortly before the initial diagnosis in March 2003, Linda Salomons and her husband David were enjoying a well-deserved vacation. Linda's mother came from New Jersey to care for their three young children. The Salomons boys enjoyed a happy and busy life. Eric and Brian are 5-year-old twins and have a brother Noah, who is 2 years older. Eric shared a room with his twin brother Brian and a close relationship with his older brother Noah. Eric looked up to Noah and they enjoyed being together. While Eric was independent, Brian was more reliant on both Eric and Noah. Their relationships and the balance of reliance was about to undergo a fundamental change when Eric would rely on Brian for a life-giving bone marrow transplant. Brian and Noah would be spending more time together as Eric endured the rigors of countless tests, hospital stays, chemotherapy, radiation and eventually, the transplant.

THE DIAGNOSIS

When David and Linda returned from their vacation, Eric had a pronounced bruise on his head from a recent bump. Her mother's concern that "something was just not right," reinforced Linda's concerns about Eric's previous bruising and his pale skin. After a visit to their local doctor, David took the call instructing them to go immediately to Upstate Medical University Hospital's Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders in Syracuse, a little more than an hour north of Vestal. Eric was admitted to the hospital right away with an extremely low platelet count. He was suffering from acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), a disease that can worsen quickly. About 4,000 new cases of ALL are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. Most occur in children under 10 years of age, but it can appear in all age groups.

THE TREATMENT, STEP ONE

One of the first steps was to surgically implant a port or tube into Eric's chest in order to give him treatments and transfusions. "We talked about his blood being sick and that the medicine would make him better," explained Linda. She is not sure what meaning Eric, who was 4 years old at the time, took from all their discussions, but "he seemed to take things in stride," Linda said. The doctors were encouraging and the family was and is inherently optimistic, so the Salomons never felt a discussion with the children about death was warranted. They were comforted by the 85% rate of cure with the treatment protocol Eric was receiving.

THE SHOCK

Linda talked about her reactions and emotions at the time of Eric's initial diagnosis. "At the beginning I was in shock. I wanted to know how long he had to live. Then I wanted information and literature that I could read. I needed to read more about it, because telling me was just not sinking in. I was too overwhelmed."

For both Linda and David, they wanted to know what needed to be done. "In some ways it was a blessing that Eric was so young he could not understand. We were concerned about how this would shape his life; he is so young and it is so unfair for any child to go through this. You can't think about why this is happening to me; that can only paralyze you. We just stepped into action mode."

THE EMOTIONS

Another mother in Linda's community also had undergone the emotions and rigors of a parent whose child suffered from leukemia. She persisted with her offers of help, even though Linda initially tried to handle it on her own. Her friend, Beth, brought over books, talked with her and became a great source of comfort and support. "We have a wonderful community. We are really blessed with an incredible support network. Neither David nor I grew up here, so our families are not close by. Local friends were willing to take Brian and Noah on a moment's notice. The cards and concern kept me going. I never thought about giving up or

feeling sorry for myself. I'm a positive person and while I appreciate being called 'Wonder Woman,' I think anyone can rise to the occasion if they need to."

CIBMTR identical twin transplant registry

CIBMTR registered 951 identical twin leukemia patients, transplanted between 1990 and 2004 and registered to the CIBMTR by 289 teams worldwide.

Breakdown of 951 leukemia transplants, by type	
Acute myelogenous leukemia	202 (21%)
Acute lymphoblastic leukemia	122 (13%)
Chronic myelogenous leukemia	118 (13%)
Other leukemia	32 (3%)
Myelodysplastic syndromes/	
Myeloproliferative disorders	51 (5%)
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	164 (17%)
Hodgkin disease	24 (3%)
Plasma cell disorders	91 (10%)
Other malignancies	61 (6%)
Severe aplastic anemia	67 (7%)
SCID and other immunodeficiencies	5 (<1%)
Other non-malignant disease	14 (1%)

The raw data represent a preliminary review of information submitted to the CIBMTR. The data presented here are preliminary and were obtained from the Statistical Center of the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research. The analysis has not been reviewed or approved by the Advisory or Scientific Committee of the CIBMTR. The data may not be published without the approval of the Advisory Committees.

For Brian and Eric, frequent family meetings, open communication and books helped support them. Noah had a workbook that discussed the feelings a sibling might have—including embarrassment, resentment and loneliness. His way of communicating was to circle a feeling identified in the book and give it to his parents to let them know how he was feeling. His parents responded by letting both boys know that it was normal and OK to feel these emotions. As the family was flooded with toys, Linda would share them with Eric, Brian and Noah. David and Linda tried to set up individual time with each boy to give them specific attention, such as taking just one of them to the movies or out for ice cream.

Brian did latch onto Noah in Eric's absence. It was difficult at times for Noah, because it was hard to have a tag-along, but Brian needed the comfort of his older brother. It was tough for Brian to face summer camp and kindergarten without his twin brother. In many situations, Brian gravitated toward just one close buddy.

resources

Linda speculates that it was his "missing twin." Linda had encouraged both Eric and Brian to do things on their own before the leukemia struck. She had planned to separate them in kindergarten and was helping them gain confidence through doing a few things on their own.

KEEPING LIFE ON TRACK

Linda leaned not only on her community but also on her husband and family. As an involved stay-at-home mom, her inclination was to take over. David, her husband wanted to continue his strong participation with his children. On weekends, David would drive up with Brian and Noah to switch places with Linda and stay with Eric. Linda had to overcome her inclination to do everything and learn to let others help, including her

husband. She found Web journaling kept family and friends informed and also provided an outlet for her love of writing. She and David worked hard to keep life as normal as possible and never found their life to be chaotic or in crisis. Taking a moment for herself to run or go for a cup of coffee was rejuvenating and helped her keep her positive attitude.

THE TREATMENT PHASES

Eric's protocol for treatment is outlined by the Pediatric Oncology Group (POG) and comes in three different treatment phases. The first four weeks of treatment is called the induction phase. The next five months is the consolidation phase. Throughout late spring and early summer 2003, Eric was in the maintenance phase. In addition to taking daily medications, his spinal fluid was tested about every three weeks to monitor his remission. Unfortunately, the leukemia cells came back and he relapsed in May 2004.

THE RELAPSE

Eric's relapse, called an isolated CNS (central nervous system) relapse, confronted the family with more decisions. Continuing with the radiation and chemotherapy gave Eric a 46% chance of avoiding another relapse, but he had a 70% chance with the bone marrow of an identical twin. Once the doctors found out that Brian was Eric's identical twin, they declared it a "no brainer" decision. The thought of bringing another child into the equation was difficult, but made perfect sense. Linda and David pursued a num-

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National Cancer Institute. Questions and answers regarding bone marrow transplants.

www.annals.org/cgi/content/full/120/8/646

Annals of Internal Medicine. Article on a study of identical twin bone marrow transplants for leukemia.

www.jlsfoundation.org

Information for parents and children facing leukemia.

ber of medical opinions, including ones from physicians at John Hopkins and Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Doctors all concurred: A bone marrow transplant gave Eric the best chance and Brian's bone marrow eliminated the graft versus host disease (GVHD) issues.

MAKING THE MATCH

To minimize the complication of GVHD, doctors use cells that match the patient's as closely as possible. People have different sets of proteins, called human leukocyte-associated (HLA) antigens, on the surface of their cells. The set of proteins, called HLA type, is identified by a special blood test. According to the National Cancer Institute, only 25% to 35% of patients have an HLA-matched sibling. Because identical twins have the same genes, they have the same set of HLA antigens. The type of transplant

Eric was to receive is called allogeneic, which means the transplant uses blood-forming cells of a donor rather than autologous, where the patient's own blood-forming cells are used. The entire family was tested, including Noah, but he was not an HLA match for Eric. Linda and David were only a 50% match.

Linda's research on the subject of twins and leukemia brought her into contact with a scientist in England. Mel Greaves, chairman of the section of hematological oncology at the Institute of Cancer Research, was very helpful and eager to assist the Salomons in any way he could. He requested a slide of Eric's leukemia cells in order to look for a marker that caused the leukemia. He could then look at Brian's blood to see if he could identify the same marker, or confirm the absence of the marker. Unfortunately, he was not able to identify the marker on Eric's slide. Brian had and will continue to have a 10% chance of contracting leukemia because his twin has had the disease. After Eric's initial diagnosis, Brian was tested and found free of leukemia.

Linda explains that Eric was blessed with a monozygotic twin, which allowed for a syngeneic transplant, meaning the tissue is identical, or nearly identical. (All syngeneic transplants are allogeneic, but not all allogeneic transplants are syngeneic.) As noted earlier, this type of transplant virtually eliminates GVHD, a serious complication similar to an organ recipient rejecting the donor organ.

In a bone marrow transplant, the transplanted cells recreate the donor's immune system in the body of the recipient. Eric's immune system cells, along with the leukemia cells, were destroyed

by chemotherapy and radiation prior to the transplant. Brian's cells recreated his immune system for Eric without the risk of GVHD. In GVHD, the donated immune system (the graft) begins to attack the recipient's body (the host). GVHD can be very difficult to treat, and potentially damaging to the skin, liver and intestines.

THE DECISION

Once Linda and David gathered as much information as they needed, they decided to move forward with the bone marrow transplant, using Brian as the donor. The next step was to decide where to have it done. Upstate Medical University Hospital in Syracuse, N.Y., did not do the procedure. In addition to considering which hospital to choose based on its reputation for bone marrow transplants, the Salomons wisely looked for the proximity of family support. Linda has a monozygotic twin who lives in New Jersey. "My sister and I became closer when we both became mothers. Our children, three boys each, are close as well," Linda explained. Her sister was only 20 minutes away from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and her parents only 1½



Eric (l.) and Brian are picking up where they left off... wrestling, playing and arguing, just like any other twins.

hours away, at the Jersey shore. Linda's parents and her sister's family took care of Brian and Noah while David worked in New York during July and August.

RECOVERY

Even though the Salomons faced a tough summer, they are a strong family. "We don't take things for granted. I'm more focused on my family and we appreciate being together," Linda explained. The children still ask questions such as "How did Eric's blood get sick?" or "What is leukemia?" and Linda and David handle them lovingly and with honesty.

Linda and David balance each other: Mom gives shelter and dad sets limits. The boys wrestle, play and argue; the busy days pass and they give thanks.

Today, Eric receives home instruction from a teacher in their school district under the Special Education 504 plan. Occasionally one of the boys will complain and say it's not fair that Eric spends so much time with mom. She reminds them that it was not fair either that Eric contracted leukemia. ♦

Joann M. Amoroso is a frequent contributor to TWINS Magazine. She lives in Englewood, Colo., with her husband Jack and triplets Mary, Annie and Joseph.

The need for transplants

Twenty-five years ago bone marrow transplants were considered experimental. According to the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), more than 30,000 children and adults are diagnosed each year with life threatening diseases for which a transplant could be a cure. The NMDP estimates that only 30% of patients find a matching donor in their family.

According to the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR), about 15,500 allogeneic transplants from related and unrelated donors were performed worldwide in 2002. The CIBMTR reports 951 identical twin transplants worldwide since 1990. They estimate they capture data on about 40% of all the allogeneic transplants worldwide.

And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon



Bennan and Grace, 4

Photo: Bernard Grant

by Elizabeth Lyons

Do you dread mealtime? Here are some solutions to toddler mealtime challenges—times two.

Nearly all parents of toddlers experience mealtime challenges in one form or another. From discovering their child has discriminating tastes, to inventing clever ways to get him to love vegetables, the toddler years are filled with mealtime trials to which parents seek solutions. When raising multiples, unique challenges often surface. From fostering undesirable dinner table habits, to insisting on matching plates, toddler-age twins frequently give parents a run for their money in the kitchen. Thankfully, myriad solutions are available from those who've been there and lived to tell about it.

It's playtime!

It's hard to find a parent who has not experienced frustration at their child's realization that watching food drop to the floor or fly toward the wall—over and over (and over) again—is tons of fun. When two children encourage each other in this game of Lob and Laugh, it's even more trying. "Toddlers have a way of putting Os in their ears and spaghetti sauce on their heads, all in the millisecond your back is turned to refill their sippy cups," said Jennifer Margulis, editor and co-author of *Toddler: Real-Life Stories of Those Fickle, Irrational, Urgent, Tiny People We Love*.

The simplest, time-tested solution to this game is to inform your children that dropping (or throwing) food isn't allowed. If it continues, the meal ends. Kids quickly learn to stop behaviors that have an unpleasant consequence. The removal of their meal is often incentive enough to encourage toddlers to cease and desist this activity sooner rather than later.

Constant mind-changing

It can be tough to elicit a firm choice from a toddler, even when it's between two cereals, two types of juice or two pizza options. With more than one child picking and choosing, the fun doesn't always stop once the decision has been made. In many cases, as the Carpenters sang, "We've only just begun."

It's common for parents to accommodate their twins' choices, and soon after hear Jimmy whine that he wants Johnny's sandwich and Johnny yell that he wants

Jimmy's drink. It's important to inform twins up front that they may choose one time. Whatever they select is what they will be served. If a child complains once he's served, an effective solution is to have him spend a few minutes in timeout and then return to the table.

As with many other toddler behaviors, "choice swapping" is likely a case of a child testing his boundaries. The key is for parents to be consistent in their approach, regardless of how long it takes for the behavior to stop.

Musical chairs

Just because of the sheer energy required to rear multiples, moms wonder some days whether they are losing their minds. When one is 90% certain that her son sat down in a particular chair only to look over 20 seconds later to find him on the opposite side of the table, she might become even more concerned about herself.

Playing musical chairs at the dinner table seems to be a much-loved pastime for multiples. A child chooses a seat only to decide he'd rather sit next to his sister, or his mother, or his father. Of course, the sibling must then change seats as well. In our house, children move in haste to a new seat many times over during a meal to get as far away as possible from any bug that's



taken up residence nearby.

There are several solutions to this challenge. One option is to assign seats by putting fun place cards or place mats at each seat. They can be changed weekly for variety, but at least you'll (perhaps) get seven days out of them. I've considered using Super Glue to adhere plates and cups to the table at the assigned seats, knowing my kids will go nowhere without their food, but quickly realized this thought presented itself during yet another moment of fleeting insanity on my part.

In all honesty, this particular challenge may be one for which you have to make a choice: Let them dance around the table and ultimately eat, or force them to stay put and end up refusing their meal. As long as there's not intense, high-pitched screaming involved, I'll admit that I sometimes yield to the latter alternative. Some days, you simply have to pick your battles!

Different preferences, different meals?

Many toddlers go through a phase in which they will eat only Spaghettios or Cheerios. Parents become concerned about their child's eating habits, and can be quick to consider him a picky eater. "It's never a good idea to label a child a picky eater or to comment on a child's eating habits within his earshot," Margulis advised. "Kids are fickle: Their tastes are not as formed as adults' and can change on a whim."

Offer a variety of easily prepared foods such as applesauce, yogurt and bananas. Provide at least one food that you know each child likes. Then, let your children choose their side dish. This way, they have

Provide at least one food that you know each child likes.



Krysta and Amanda, 21 months

control of their choices, and you have control over the choices offered. It helps to eliminate a situation in which a child is begging for ice cream next to his chicken!

One bite and I'm done!

Mollie Niederpruem, mother to 2-year-old twin boys in Naperville, Ill., is working through an all-too-common challenge. "My biggest challenge is that the boys love to play. The minute one is finished eating, the other also has to get down to protect his toys and make sure his brother isn't having fun without him. It seems a meal is never finished!"

Many kids jump down from the table only to return five minutes later to shove a handful of food into their mouths and run off again. Let them know that this isn't an option. Tell them that once they get up from the table, their meal is over, and food won't be served again until the next meal.

Remember that it can be hard for young kids to sit still for a long time. Keep your expectations realistic. A toddler can be expected to sit at the table for about 10 minutes.

Mealtimes should be a time for pleas-

It's never a good idea to label a child a picky eater.

ant family conversation. When your kids come to you during the day, excited about the ladybug they just found, suggest that you talk about it more at dinner.

Help kids get invested in the family mealtime. Even a toddler can put napkins and salt-and-pepper shakers on the table or color paper place mats.

Me-no-like syndrome

While toddlers may enjoy subsisting on hot dogs and pizza, their parents would fall apart on this diet day in and day out. Many mothers get a bit of a "second wind" in the kitchen during the toddler years and vow to begin cooking healthy, easily prepared meals that the family can enjoy together. Often, however, only the parents enjoy the meal while the children cry in protest.

One solution is to put a bottle of ketchup on the table. For some unknown reason, it seems that most children might eat even brussels sprouts if they are smothered in ketchup. Regardless, do not feel as though you need to become a short-order cook to keep your children happy and well-nourished.

"I am very comfortable with a child missing a meal if they refuse to eat the prepared meal or alternatively, if one other option is offered and refused," explained Dr. Mark Gettleman, a pediatrician in Glendale, Ariz. He also proposed a power-struggle solution: "Parents decide what and when kids eat, and kids decide how much they eat."

Introducing new foods

New toys excite toddlers. New foods do not. "The best thing you can do when your kids refuse or fuss about food is ignore it," suggested Margulis. "Another approach is to add 'today' or 'right now' to the end of their sentence. 'Oh, you don't like broccoli today?'" This suggests the possibility that the next time that particular food is served, the reaction might be different.

Fortunately, parents needn't be terribly concerned over the daily content of their children's diets. "While I would love for children to eat more fruits and vegetables and less fat, young kids (especially 2- to 5-year-olds) tend to prefer only two to three foods such as macaroni-and-cheese, chicken nuggets and hot dogs," Dr. Gettleman said. "I believe that nutrition should be judged over an extended period of time, not meal-to-meal or daily."

No doubt, the toddler years are full of challenges. Nonetheless, they're also a time of great discoveries, laughter and growth. Time passes all too quickly. So even amid flung French fries, swapped seats and numerous me-no-like-this meals, perspective is important.

Sometimes, when the food is flying and frustration sets in, think ahead to the time when your twins will be tossing food around a college dining hall. It seems that they leave home before we can blink. We will have plenty of time for quiet meals

Even a toddler can put napkins and salt-and- pepper shakers on the table or color paper place mats.

when they're grown. For now, wash the mashed potatoes out of their hair and enjoy the chaos. ♦

Elizabeth Lyons is the author of *Ready or Not...Here We Come! The REAL Experts' Cannot-Live-Without Guide to the First Year with Twins*. She lives in the Chicago area with her husband, daughter and twin girls. Her Web site is www.elizabethlyons.com.

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Mallory and Michelle, 18 months

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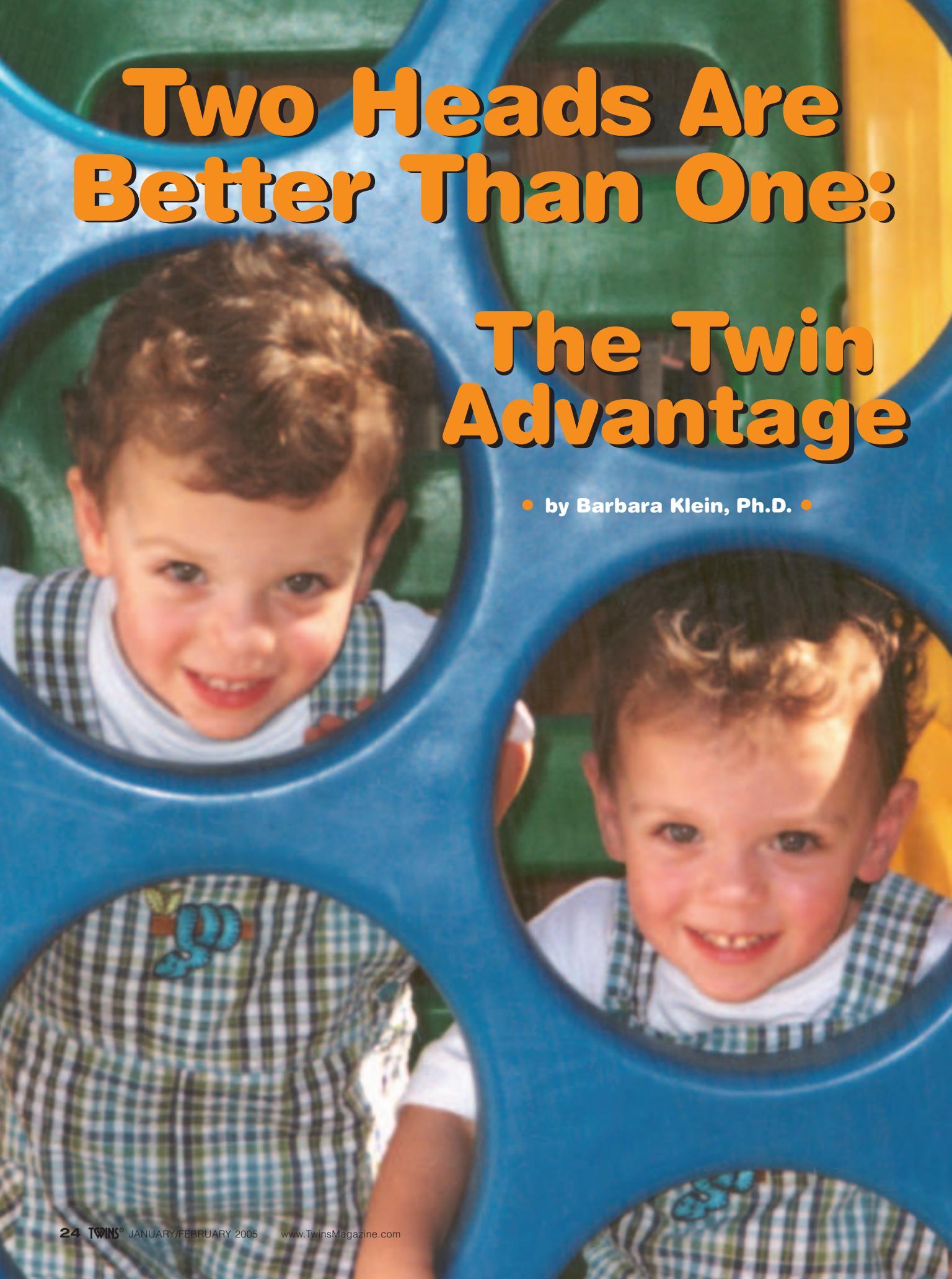
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Two Heads Are Better Than One: The Twin Advantage

• by Barbara Klein, Ph.D. •

“What’s it like to be a twin?” “We don’t know.

What’s it like to be a singleton?”

One thing is sure:

Twins enjoy distinct advantages in life.

We all know that two heads are better than one. The old saying conjures up positive images of collaboration, cooperation, sharing, support and maybe a sprinkle of friendly competition. These are images of the twin advantage.

Twins can fight and bicker all they want, but let someone else pick a fight with one of them and the outsider quickly finds it’s one against two. Or you may have had the experience of disciplining one twin and the co-twin coming to his twin’s defense.

When twins share a healthy twin bond, they enjoy many benefits of putting two heads together.

Advantage one: share mates

Twins are born married. They learn in the womb and thereafter, by a variety of positive and negative experiences, how to share. They share their parents. When they are young, they share the breast, food, cribs, toys and clothes. They share the attention of others. Uniquely, they share a bond that comes from the closeness of always being together, playing together, imitating one another and communicating with each other through verbal and nonverbal cues. This intense communication makes them smarter as well as quicker.

Cooperation and sharing come naturally to twins, although at times you may doubt it. In contrast, sharing is not natural for single children who need to learn how to share parents, friends, grandparents, teachers, toys and clothes. Young twins know only the “sharing experience.” And knowing how to share is a real plus for twins in early social situations with playmates and classmates.

From the beginning of their lives, twins are aware of the needs of another person. Twins are not necessarily threatened by giving in or giving up, as single children often are. Twins enjoy cooperation because they have experienced its pleasures and rewards. Imagine how young twins communicate in their own ways, through play and games with words and actions. Twins, because they know how to share, become master communicators and empathizers. Learning the skills and importance of sharing, listening and responding is an advantage that will be theirs for life.

Advantage two: attention magnet

Twins get a lot of attention for just being twins. They have “star power.” People come up to twins and ask them or their parents all sorts of personal questions about being twins. While this can limit their individual development, constant attention can also make twins more aware of who they are as individuals and as a pair.

“Having twins draws attention almost everywhere we go,” said Robye Nothnagel of Wolcott, Colo., who is a mother of 3 ½-year-olds. “This is especially so because I have girly girls who love to dress up. People are always saying how cute they are and they’ve heard this so much I think they know they are cute.”

The advantage of a great deal of attention is that it presents the opportunity to gain experience and comfort in social situations. Indeed, twins can learn to mingle and interact with others at an early age and to develop this important socialization skill. Often, twins tend to be outgoing rather

than shy in new situations. Twins can learn some social savvy that most single children do not have a chance to develop.

Advantage three: empathy for one another

Twins understand one another on a very deep level because of all of their verbal and nonverbal communication. Twins have an uncanny ability to finish each other’s sentences. Twins understand—without words—why their brother or sister is sad, happy or mad. This capacity to understand one another nurtures a stronger sense of self in each twin.

“They always have a built-in support system and friend,” said Kimberly Grant of Brentwood, Calif. When her 4 ½-year-old twin girls Katy and Alex went trick-or-treating Katy started to cry. “She thought she didn’t have enough candy so Alex grabbed some candy for Katy,” Kimberly explained. “The lady [at the door of the house] told Alex she had taken too much candy but Alex didn’t really care.”

“My twins are very close,” said Noell Bagwell of Ft. Myers, Fla. Her then 1-year-old twins Gideon and Morrigan were not feeling well because of shots they got at their doctor’s appointments. That night Morrigan woke up screaming. When Noell picked up Morrigan, she heard Gideon moaning; he was hurting. “I went to take Morrigan out and she grabbed me very tight, got a worried look on her face and did her ‘sister grunt’ so I had to pick up Giddy. Then she smiled and was happy to come with me. I took them to my room and she was very tired but would not lay down. She sat there watching Giddy and patting his back and bum, like I do to

them both. She got mad at me if I stopped comforting Giddy to tend to her and she would start to pat his back. She is the stronger and bigger twin and looks out for him... bullies him, but she is the bigger 'younger' sister."

Clearly, twins share empathy for one another, which provides them with comfort and a sense of belonging. Most people seek out this kind of deep intimacy throughout their lives but may never find it.

Advantage four: constant companion

While some children have to go it alone or bring a friend along to new social situations, twins are guaranteed a special companion who knows their likes, dislikes and quirks. This is a highly significant advantage that surpasses any other, at least for children and adolescents. It is very positive and supportive to be able to go into a new situation and have a like-minded friend to share the experience—someone who can tell you what they thought about the new teacher, dance class, soccer game or trip to the beach. And guess what? When the next event comes around, you still have that certain someone with whom to make plans. The constant companionship of a twin is very much like having a mini-support group at your side when you need it.

This aspect of twinship is envied by non-twins, and rightly so. In childhood and adolescence, twins function as a spouse or business partner might in adulthood. Twins can put their heads together to try out ideas and test their reactions to situations. Together they can size up what's going on fairly quickly. This constant feedback loop can make them smarter and quicker. Twins often are a lively pair.

Advantage five: the competitive edge

Twins who are healthy and who have a good sense of their own individual strengths find competition to be enliven-

The Twin Advantage

- 1. Share Mates**
- 2. Attention Magnets**
- 3. Empathy Providers**
- 4. Constant Companion**
- 5. Friendly Competitors**
- 6. Cooperative Allies**
- 7. Soul Mates**

ing and fun. As long as competition is not overly emphasized, twins learn to "play the game" and have fun doing so. They find out how to increase or improve their skills and to become more focused. Whether trying to be the best at shopping, piano-playing or tennis, a match-up can make twins try harder. Twins learn the importance of the competitive edge much earlier than single

Make the Most of the Twin Advantage

- 1. Tune into your children's individual strengths.**
- 2. Respect and cherish the twin bond.**
- 3. Allow twins to have their twin time.**
- 4. Make each twin feel like a star in their own right and light.**
- 5. Realize that competition between twins is normal.**

children. Twins learn to accept winning and losing and can take their winning and losing experiences into other arenas.

Experts suggest to parents that twins can be too competitive with each other, but I disagree. Twins can enjoy competition and feed off each other in a positive way. They seem to have a very different understanding of what it means to win and lose than single

children do. Twins are not devastated by losing; there is always another game or the next round of fun and challenge.

Advantage six: cooperative ally

Your twins probably have figured out how to open latches, push chairs around and climb over gates... feats a singleton takes much longer to accomplish alone. In other words, they learn early that two heads are better than one.

As twins get older and they have their own lives and their own families, their relationship naturally changes. As adults, twins usually do not see each other on a daily basis. Their relationship becomes more focused on helping one another through life situations such as marriage, careers, children, divorce, illness and loss of significant others. Twins offer one another deep understanding about such serious issues and can provide one another with hands-on help. Twins have the advantage of being each other's cooperative ally.

Advantage seven: soul mates

The photograph of twins embracing in a NICU isolette is legendary by now (known as "The Rescuing Hug"). These twins' heart and respiratory rates stabilized when they were together.

As twins get older, they gain wisdom and insight into their twin relationship. They understand one another more completely as individuals. In most instances, twins learn to accept each other's differences even if, or when, they find their co-twin to be annoying or difficult. Twins who have shared so many of their memories and experiences are soul mates.

The role of identity

The twin bond is the basis of the advantages twins share throughout their lives. The twin bond is a deep emotional and intellectual thread that ties twins intimately to one another—a lifelong connection. Psychologists believe that the link



Katie and Nicole, 2½ years

between twins begins in the womb and develops consciously and unconsciously throughout their lives.

After speaking with more than 100 sets of adult twins about the bond they share, I feel confident in quoting one twin: "The experience of growing up as a twin and the connection we share wouldn't be so hard to understand if everyone were brought up as a twin. As adults we share a bond of trust based on shared memories and experiences."

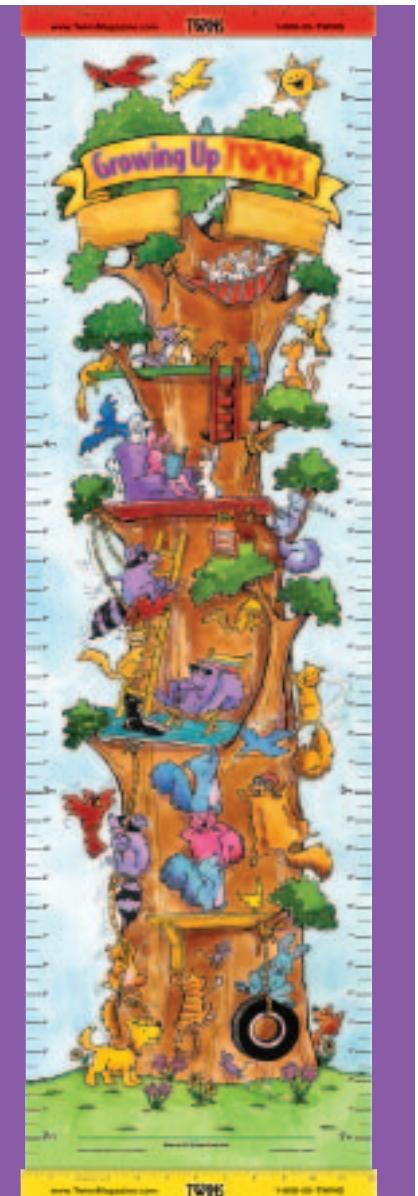
The twin advantage is stronger when each twin has been allowed to develop his or her own identity. Parenting that allows each twin to develop a unique sense of self and at the same time to share and cherish an intense connection will give twins an emotional advantage with others and a soul mate for life.

On the other hand, twins who are overly dependent on one another, because of a lack of parenting, have a more difficult time developing meaningful adult relationships with non-twins. Their link with one another can be so extremely close that they actually need one another to function and survive in the world. This type of closeness is unusual in today's world, because so much is now known about how to rear twins.

A lifelong bond

Twins share the warm comfort that comes from having someone understand their deepest thoughts and feelings. Twins have an ally who will stand by them through the good and bad times of their lives. Twins cheer each other on and feel one another's pain. Young twins have a constant companion for play time and at school. Older twins have a perennial colleague, someone to turn to with their questions and concerns about the issues of adult life. In most twinships, the advantages of being a twin outweigh the disadvantages. All of the adult twins with whom I have spoken cherish their sister or brother and feel that being a twin is a precious gift. Parents who are attuned to each of their twin children's special qualities will rear two strong individuals who will love and support each other throughout their lifetimes. ♡

Barbara Klein, Ph.D., is the author of *Not All Twins Are Alike: Psychological Profiles of Twinship* (Praeger 2003). She is an educational and twin consultant who can be reached through her Web site, www.drbarbaraklein.com. Her next book is *Saving Your Smart Kids: A Parent's Guide to Giftedness*.



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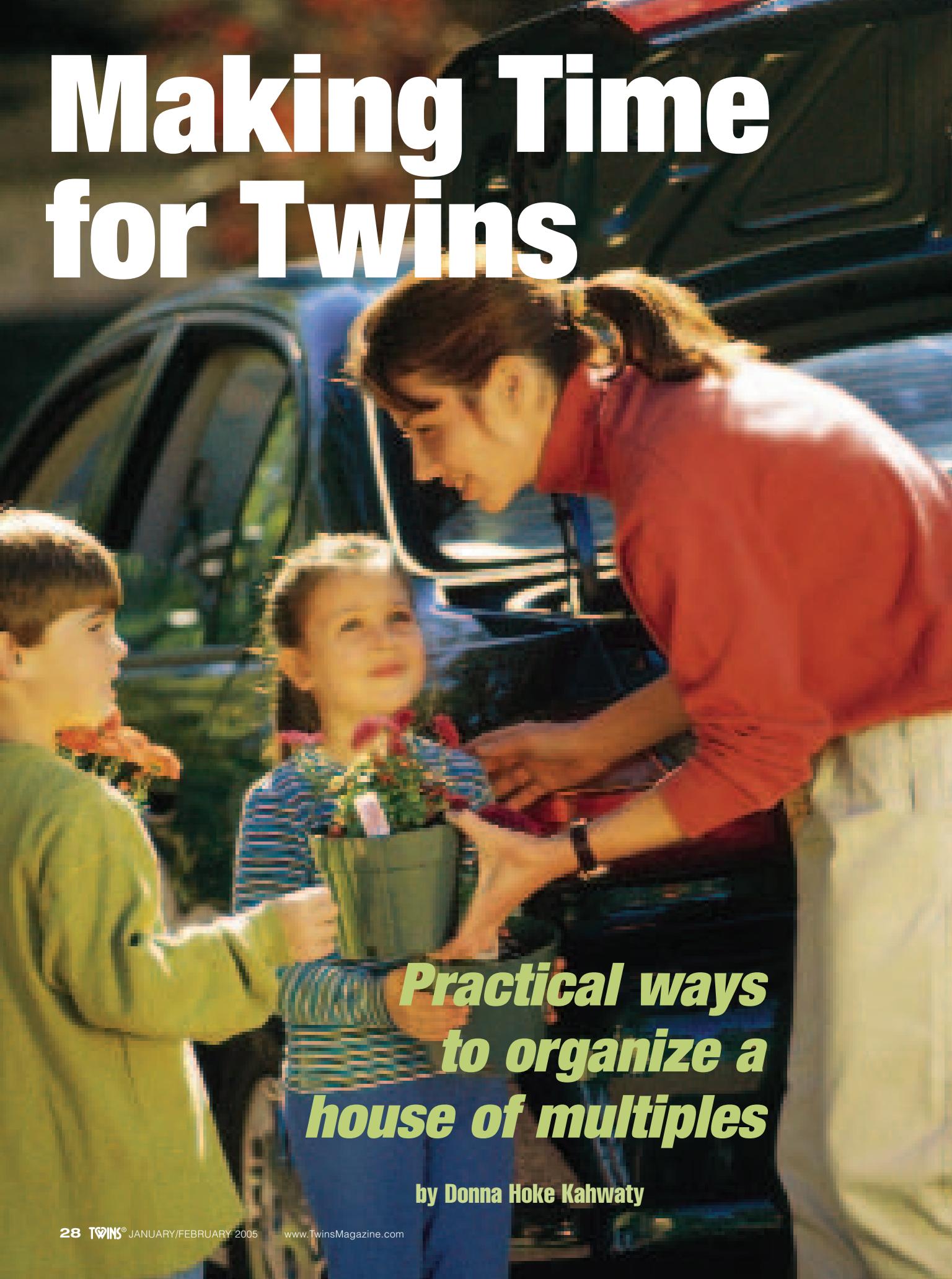
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Making Time for Twins

A photograph of a woman in a red shirt and a young girl in a striped shirt holding laundry baskets. A boy in a green shirt stands to the left. They are in a laundry room with a clothesline and laundry basket in the background.

***Practical ways
to organize a
house of multiples***

by Donna Hoke Kahwaty

As the single mother of two sets of fraternal twins, I am asked two questions with astonishing frequency: "What are the odds?" and "Do you have help?" Both questions have simple answers: "About one in 3000," and "No." It's that second answer that really throws people.

Is not having help truly that amazing? I don't think so. If you've got even one set of twins, you already know how much a little planning and organization can ease your daily stress; it follows, then, that more is better. And believe it or not, there are ways to be organized and save time that don't involve corralling neighbors into a bulk cooking scheme.

Start off on the right foot

When I was pregnant with my first set of twins, the most important piece of advice I got (and the one I pass on most often) wasn't what singleton moms hear—"Sleep when the baby sleeps"—but "Get them on the same schedule." There will be plenty of time for your children to be individuals later; when they're babies, your sanity is best preserved if they have the schedule of a single infant.

It's easier than it sounds. When one baby wakes to eat, rouse the other. It's likely the second would wake within 30 minutes anyway, but that 30 minutes can throw off the whole day. Feeding the babies together helps synchronize the nap schedule and also cuts feeding time in half. Once the twins start solids, you'll save both time and dishes if you mix or place the food in one bowl and use a single spoon, alternating mouthfuls. The resultant simultaneous naps will provide much needed breaks (so that if you actually want to sleep while the babies sleep, you can) and energy to manage the non-nap hours.

Reduce clothing chaos

My daughters were the recipients of four baby showers' worth of gifts. When they were born, I was deluged with even more clothes. If this sounds like you, I recommend exchanging at least half of what you got for store credit to buy clothes in larger sizes later. You might feel guilty returning the gifts of well-meaning friends and family, but chances are, your children won't wear most of it more than once—if at all—and later you'll still feel guilty as you pack up brand-new clothes to give away. Children are not clothes horses; dealing with fewer clothes reduces stress, and has the added bonus of forcing you to keep up with the laundry.

Assign outfits arbitrarily to each child, creating separate drawers with his or her clothes in it. Create another drawer that is a "both" drawer containing socks, onesies, bibs and other nondescript items. These things are too small and indistinguishable to worry about and as your children get older and begin to dress themselves, having a common drawer will make it easier for them. At 9, my daughters still have a "both" drawer, but over time, there was a gradual separation of the items (9-year-old girls do not want to share underwear, after all). If the kids don't worry about it, neither should you.

Keep a large box in your children's closet where you can immediately place clothes they have outgrown. When the box is full, donate it and replace the box. This saves those rainy days for cuddling and

watching movies instead of "going through the drawers." It also saves storage space in your attic.

If you've been on the receiving end of multitudes of hand-me-downs (people often have an urge to help out mothers of multiples), go through the bags as soon as you get them (perhaps while watching "Sesame Street"), sort by size and season, label each bag and put it in storage. When the children reach the right size, grab the bag and you're good to go.

Get up and go

"Did you pack the diaper bag?" we yell to dad (even though deep down we worry that if we let him pack the diaper bag, he will forget something critical—like diapers), five minutes after we should be leaving. Why does this job always seem to be done on the fly when the solution couldn't be simpler? Have duplicates of everything—diapers, wipes, bottles, formula packets, bibs, spoons, bowls, jars of food, rattles—in the diaper bag at all times. When you get home from an outing, leave the diaper bag on the kitchen counter, so that later when your kids are in their Exersaucers eating Cheerios, you can wash the bottles and dishes, replenish the wipes and diapers and have the bag ready to go the next time you're rushing out the door. You will impress everyone when you begin arriving on time with twins.

It's also smart to keep a spare set of clothes or two in the trunk of the car, even if it's just a couple of T-shirts and some

hand-me-down sweatpants. With twins, it's not unusual to need two spare sets of clothes, sometimes even three, and they just won't all fit in a diaper bag.

Take control of toys

If anything multiplied faster than my children, it was their toys. Having girls means an endless supply of Barbie minutia—what mother of girls doesn't know intimately the sound of a Barbie shoe being sucked into the vacuum? The Barbie stuff made me nuts, but organizing it into stacking carts made it manageable. With varied drawer sizes, food, clothes, furniture and dolls were all easy to find and put away.

For other toys, racks with easily accessible bins work best; if toys are thrown randomly into a box, there they will stay. I have found that like my own scrapbooking and rubber-stamping supplies, the more visible and logically arranged the toys, the more they get used. This isn't to say that when toys are organized, they will stay that way; they won't. Boys will still find that stuffing all the cars inside the Elefun trunk is a worthwhile activity, but if the cars are left there, it's unlikely either toy will get used again.

Unfortunately, small kids lack the focus to do a great organization job, so about once a month, I give them a wonderful treat and do it myself. The catch? While I do it, I pack up, get rid of and throw away anything that no longer works, is missing pieces, has been outgrown or was a one-hit wonder (like all those fast food prizes). Trust me: When they see all their toys organized, put back together and easy to find, they never miss what's gone. Don't keep more toys than fit in the play area; like clothes, managing too many toys can become a part-time job.

One more thing: Toys migrate. You may have a perfectly good play area established, but children often like to be where mom is, so you will find toys in the kitchen, the office and the family room. Don't fight it. Instead,

**If something lays
on my kitchen
counter longer than
three days, out it
goes. Sound tough?
It gets easier. My
kids actually come
to me now and say,
“I don’t care
about this.”**

put a big basket in the rooms where toys tend to congregate, and at the end of the day, throw the stray toys in it. The room will look neat enough to allow guilt-free sleep, and at the end of the week, the basket can be emptied. (Tip: Emptying the basket is a great allowance job for older kids.)

Make the most of mealtime

Pleasing multiple palates is a formidable task, but there will always be some meals that do the trick. Once I accepted that, dinner time became much more about spending time together and less about encouraging children to clean their plates. I now have a standard repertoire of about 10 easy recipes that make everyone happy. One child may need her sausage and peppers on the side with butter on her pasta, but at least we're all eating the same thing. This makes shopping easier, since I'm always sure to replenish ingredients for these staples, and I know that even when I'm time-crunched, I can always whip up a nutritious meal that will make everyone happy.

Once or twice a month, I make something just for me and make everybody try it. In return, I sometimes take a break and let my daughters make dinner, even if it's grilled cheese or scrambled eggs. This keeps us from getting into a rut and ensures that my kids still try new things.

Cope with cleaning and clutter

If cleaning makes your children whine, make it as much a routine as homework or bathing. Since my girls were little, they have loved getting assignments. "Clean your room" seems insurmountable, but "Pick up the clothes off your floor," "Clear your dresser," or "Organize your nightstand drawer," breaks things up into manageable chunks.

Ask the kids to clean their room together and before you know it, they'll be rediscovering the "lost" toys under their beds.

(This, by the way, is an ingenious strategy when you need some quiet time. If you tell them to go clean and not come back until it's done, you won't see them for hours.)

With less distraction, each child will be more productive. We put on fun music (the girls love the "Mamma Mia!" soundtrack) and clean together; the time goes by quickly and the house gets done. For pointers on daily clutter maintenance, I love www.flylady.net. It's not for everyone, but I don't know anyone who didn't find at least one or two great de-cluttering tips there.

To keep things manageable in other parts of the house, I don't allow any playing in the living or dining rooms. With all the areas my kids have to play in, there is no need to use these spaces for toys or entertaining play dates. Having two rooms that remain uncluttered gives me a sanctuary to read or enjoy a crossword puzzle. I often catch my daughters in there reading, and often, it's where my boys like to be read to as well.

One last note: Learn to throw things away on the spot. That includes junk mail,



**Remember that
you're rearing
twins, which takes
more time, energy
and patience than
rearing a single
child.**

birthday goody bags and unidentified toy pieces. Ask the kids, "Do you care about this?" If the answer is no, out it goes. If something lays on my kitchen counter longer than three days, out it goes. Sound tough? It gets easier. My kids actually come up to me now and say, "I don't care about this." Out it goes.

I make exceptions for school projects, but deciding what to keep and what to throw away is easier if you establish rules. In my house, the item must either be a) unique in that it is somehow different from every other student's or b) a holiday item that can be packed away in the appropriate seasonal box. This has worked very well to keep our "saving box" to a minimum. As my daughters got older and their projects got bigger and three-dimensional, I found that taking pictures satisfied us. My daughter had no trouble disassembling her pretzel-rod log cabin once she knew it was memorialized on a scrapbook page of "First Grade Art."

Repeat the rules, repeat the rules

When my daughters were in kindergarten, I attended Back-To-School Night. There, Sabrina's teacher told me that the

kids had a basic routine: They entered the room, hung up their jackets, put their folders on her desk and put away their lunches. She added that they were six weeks into the year and only about half the class had the routine down.

What seems obvious to us takes kids a while. Routines do not become routines as easily for them as they do for us. And if you have twice the kids, things can take twice the time to become second nature. We all make organizational rules, but they must be enforced. That means that every day, we have to remind them to "Hang up your backpack," "Put your plate in the sink," "Throw your clothes in the hamper." It might seem easier to do it yourself, but if you're persistent, you'll save yourself doing all those tasks times two, or three or four.

Choose what's most important

"There are not enough hours in a day." We've all said it, but how many of us really take the time to figure out exactly how we spend the hours we do have? How much time are we wasting each day and what are the things we don't have time for that we wish we did?

Mothers of twins are multi-tasking

mavens. We're already skilled at bathing, feeding or rocking two children simultaneously. So go further. While the kids are in the tub, organize the medicine cabinet. Fold laundry while you're watching "Blue's Clues" together. Buy a chariot for your bike and get your exercise while giving your toddlers a ride. This week, I discovered a small supermarket right next to the pool where my daughter has swim practice, so instead of killing time waiting for her, I take the other three and get the grocery shopping done. A minute shaved on chores is a minute saved for what is truly important to you.

In the end, do what works for you and your family, and set realistic expectations for yourself. Remember that you're rearing twins, which takes more time, energy and patience than rearing a single child. Some things will give. Let them go without guilt and know that you are doing your best. ♦

Donna Kahwaty is a freelance writer and a mother of six: two sets of twins and a third set that lived only three days. She keeps her home in Wharton, N.J., organized and running smoothly—most days.



Expecting the Unexpected

***Twins? It's
never too
late to plan
for financial
changes.***

by David R. Powell, CFP, CLU, CRPC

Having twins is wonderful and rewarding. Having twins is challenging. Having twins can wreck your finances but it doesn't have to.

Part of preparing for the arrival of your twins is developing a realistic financial plan. As a financial advisor with 18 years' experience, and the father of 4-year-old twins at age 49, I can offer some insight into some of the financial and life choices you soon will have to make.

Some parents will tell you that twins are more expensive to rear than singleton children. I disagree, in part. In general, there really isn't too much that costs more for twins than it does for two singleton children. The challenge with twins is the timing; expenses come all at once. Diapers and child care cost the same for two singleton children as for twins, but the cost is spread out. Buying toys and clothing for twins can be more expensive because there may not be any hand-me-downs. Babysitting costs are usually a little higher. The same can be said for health insurance or college tuition.

Most parents struggle financially with the suddenness of the change in their financial circumstances. With multiples, there may not be a break-in period; with single-born children, the family has an opportunity to adjust over time to their new financial realities. And often, the new parents of multiples are first-time parents. If they are older, they may have undergone fertility treatments. The family must quickly adjust to significantly higher expenses—often on top of the enormous cost of the fertility treatments—plus the real possibility of one spouse leaving work to provide care. Without real financial planning, this can become a recipe for strained checkbooks, mounting debt and drained cash reserves.

I also see many parents of multiples underestimating the severity of the financial and lifestyle change, as well as the scope of the change. Somehow, they seem to think that the cash flow problem is temporary; they don't see it as a permanent challenge. Many couples slip into financial trouble before they recognize the problem as real. By then, the options to restore financial stability may be limited, and also more harsh, than if proper planning had been done early.

In order to get a grasp on the problem before it gets out of control, I recommend that new parents of twins do comprehensive planning to determine in advance some answers to the financial and lifestyle challenges they will face.

If you already have twins and your finances are in trouble, better act now rather than later, or never. I urge you to take control of the situation and do some financial planning—before your situation further degrades.

Cash flow and budgeting

"Twins? Great, honey! We'll need to redo the nursery, buy cribs, strollers, car seats, bouncer seats, swings, high chairs, Pack 'n Plays and two sets of clothes." And the list goes on.

Rather than going on a hormone-induced spending spree, take a hard look at your budget before you run to the store. In the midst of the excitement, it is easy to overspend on furniture and clothing.

Want an analysis of your financial situation?

David R. Powell will conduct three free, abbreviated financial analyses with recommendations for solving problems and suggestions to improve your financial situation. Send us your information by March 15 and we will select three cases for publication in an upcoming issue. (Of course, we won't use your name or identifying information.)

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It makes more sense to first figure out the cash flow and budget, as well as who will be working.

Cash should be hoarded in anticipation of the outflow ahead. You will need cash to smooth out all the financial bumps you will hit over the next several years. If your cash reserves are low, consider ways you can boost them before delivery.

To build on that idea, a smart couple also will try to forecast their cash flow for a few years, just to see how the financial picture will look. You may have to make some hard choices in prioritizing your budget. Plan on extra healthcare and day care costs, baby furniture, clothing, toys, videos, babysitters—and lots and lots of diapers and wipes. When you do this, you realize that this is a permanent change to your lifestyle, not something temporary. And don't forget, right behind the baby years comes preschool—plus swimming, piano and gymnastics lessons.

10 bottom-line questions

- What should we do to plan for our new babies and the costs that will accompany parenthood?
- Are we living within our means now? Have we been saving or are we just scraping by?
- Are our credit card bills under control, or are we making only the minimum monthly payments?
- How will our tax situation change?
- Do we need to change our life insurance and disability insurance plans?
- Will we both work and pay child care, or will one of us stay home with the twins?
- Is our house suitable for a larger family? What can we rearrange to adapt? Or do we need to expand or move?
- What about our vehicles? Do we need a larger car to accommodate two car seats, two strollers and two Pack 'n Plays?
- How much will groceries and clothing expenses increase?
- Can we afford to start a college fund now?

Your checkbook will take on a whole different look if one spouse stays home with the children, even if just for a few years. Here's a smart strategy: Immediately pretend you are living on just one income, using the months until delivery as an adjustment period financially. Adjusting now sure beats adjusting once you are dead tired from double feedings all night and don't care about anything anymore, other than four hours of solid sleep.

Remember, cash flow is king. Your focus prior to delivery is to get your cash flow house in order and to build reserves. If you can keep your cash flow in good shape, many potential problems will be easier to manage.

Will you both work?

Think twice if you are planning for both spouses to work. The cost of day care alone for young twins may make it a foolish choice. In our area, for instance, good day care for two infants or toddlers will run about \$1,800 to \$2,400 per month, and up. If your taxable income is much over \$50,000, the combined federal, state and FICA tax bracket of 40% is going to mean you have to earn \$40,000

per year just to break even on the cost of the day care. And we haven't added in all the other costs of working—commuting, clothing, lunches, dry cleaning and more.

Even with twins, the spouse at home has some time to do household chores and plan meals for the family. Otherwise, a fair amount of money will go to take-out dinners, which is very expensive. So, if you work 40 hours per week and earn, say, \$50,000, and you see maybe \$8,000 actually get to your pocket after taxes, child care and take-out, you made less than \$4 per hour net and missed your children growing up. This requires some thinking, doesn't it?

Insurance

Be prepared for health insurance costs to go up, as well as all your co-pays. Each trip to the doctor or dentist is a double. Make arrangements early to be concrete-sure that your babies are covered at delivery, even if you must pay extra health premiums for a few months. Many times multiples arrive early and when least expected, often resulting in long NICU stays for both babies. Become familiar with your health insurance policy, and be prepared for a possible intensive care unit bill. Construct a good contingency plan at work, and ask your boss for some compassion and understanding.

A word of caution: Watch out for billing errors. Some health insurers use birthdays to track claims before social security numbers are assigned. If you have multiples, they all have the same birthday. What a mess this can be.

What about life and disability insurance? Even though you may be able to shift the family to a spouse's health benefits, life and disability insurance through an employer must be replaced for the spouse who stays home. Disability insurance may not be available to the mother once pregnancy progresses to a certain point. For life insurance, it may become difficult to receive a good rating, since lab values for a pregnant woman may show abnormal. Consequently, some insurance companies may refuse to issue coverage until after delivery. Address these insurance needs immediately upon learning that twins are on the way.

I have found that most couples are underinsured, and many make the mistake of relying on their employer for all their coverage. This is a big trap, and one problem that should be rectified as quickly as possible. Many insurance companies now write term life insurance with premiums guaranteed for a long period of time, such as 10 or 20 years. Depending upon your health, the premiums can be quite low, especially if you are in your 30s. There is no reason for a family to run the risk of putting family survivors in financial jeopardy.

And new dads, please don't make the mistake of assuming that your wife does not need life insurance because she isn't bringing home a paycheck. If she dies, you will need help raising your children; your family and friends, if available, will become worn out quickly. You likely will be forced to hire a nanny and will need the funds to do so.

New vehicle?

A couple expecting twins, especially if they already have a child, may have to change their vehicle. Not many vehicles have room for two Pack 'n Plays plus luggage, diapers and toys for a visit with Granny. (An army carries less stuff than my twins going to Granny's.) On the other hand, if most travel is local and your vehicle is adequate for that, consider keeping it and renting a larger vehicle if you take a long trip. Be sure, though, that you get full disclosure of any costs for extra or out-of-state mileage before renting.

College fund

College fund? New parents immediately set this as a goal, and I applaud them for it. If it is in your budget, start right away. But my experience helping families says this decision could be delayed a couple of years, especially if cash flow pressures feel burdensome.

The adjustment period for most families as they come down to one income or incur big day care bills is hard enough, without trying to immediately begin saving \$300 to \$400 per month for college. Wait a few years and see how things shake out. Around age 3, your diaper savings alone could give you enough new cash flow to open a small college savings account. If you pay for day care, you may have to wait until the twins head off to school to see enough cash flow improvement to begin real college savings.

When it is time to save money for college, there are a variety of ways to do it, including taxable savings and Uniform Transfers to Minors Accounts (UTMA). College savings plans—namely, new 529 plans and Coverdell accounts—are tax-advantaged and allow you to retain control of the funds after your child reaches the age of majority. While your cash flow is under pressure, maybe your parents would like to get the ball rolling by making a gift to your twins' education in one of these plans.

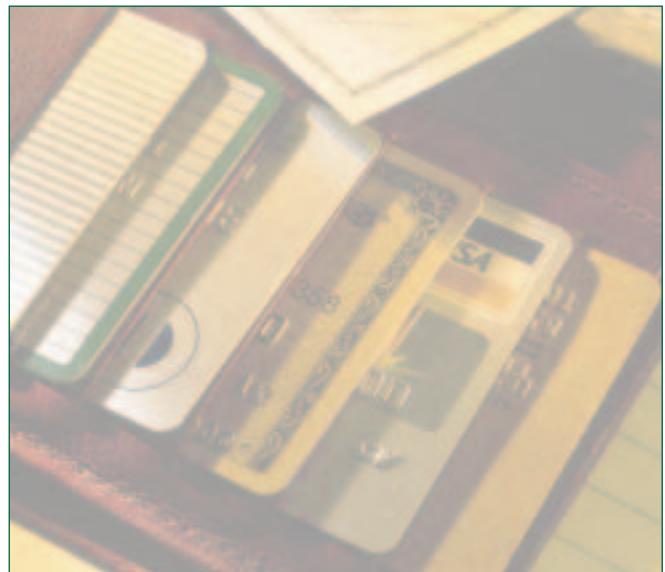
"Savings accelerators," such as Upromise.com and babymint.com, rebate a portion of your spending to help you save for college whenever you make certain purchases through their Web sites or when you register your credit cards with them. Carefully evaluate these offers. Many times, the savings may come at a premium compared with a regular price.

Whatever direction you take your children's college plans, it is important to get the facts and review your options with a financial advisor to help you determine what is best for your situation.

General planning

The months prior to delivery go by fast, and there is much work to be done. My advice is to get it all done by the sixth month. You do not have as much time as you think you have. You may be ordered to bed rest and twins sometimes arrive early. Now is the time to beg friends and relatives to lend you hand-me-downs and also to agree to help you with those double feedings. Note: The list of people willing to help with a 2 a.m. double feeding will be short.

Some hospitals or doctors sell diapers or formula at a discount. Sometimes you can get a supply of diapers before delivery, but put some thought into the size of diapers to pre-order. Size 1s are a good choice; you will use those sooner or later.



If credit card spending is a problem in your household, here's one way to take control. Determine in advance how much you can afford to spend on the card, and then commit to stay within that limit. It is very hard though, because no one ever knows or can recount what they have spent until the statement arrives at the end of the month. The best way to keep track of this is to wrap your card in a piece of paper, and then jot down and total of each purchase as you make it. This gives you immediate feedback as to how much has been spent, what it was spent on and how much you have left to spend. Paper is the only way this works. Trying to track this on the computer often fails because you can't feed babies, change diapers and work on the computer, all at the same time. For the same reason, it is tough to check your credit card account balance and charges online.

Another worthwhile idea is to look for a mothers-of-multiples club in your area. In our area, the club has sales of consignment items that makes it a little less costly for clothing and other necessary items, such as cribs and strollers. In addition to financial benefits, club members offer support and advice that only an experienced mom of multiples can pass on to a new mother. You will learn how other parents adapt and deal with the same changes your family faces. And when the group meets for special events, such as Halloween, you will get a kick out of seeing so many twins and multiples in one place and all having so much fun.

Having twins is both rewarding and challenging. If you do some good financial planning in advance, you can reduce some of your stress, freeing yourself to concentrate on enjoying your twins. ♦

David R. Powell is the father of 4-year-old twins and a financial planner with American Express Financial Advisors, Inc., in Raleigh, N.C. You can e-mail him at david.r.powell@aexp.com or call (919) 870-8930.

The old marriage



She said:

My husband and I are in the first year of having twins and feel like we're drowning. We had a great marriage before twins, but now we're at each other's throats constantly. Help! I want my old marriage back.

Tiffany

He said:

I want my old marriage back, too. Tiffany is never available and she bosses me around, especially about the twins, and then the picking and bickering starts. Things never used to be this way.

Cole

No doubt, twins are hard on a marriage. It gets better with time, but there are things we have to do in a marriage to keep our spousal relationship on track. Studies show that marital satisfaction often goes into the hamper once kids come onto the scene. Marriage can suffer because our emotional and financial resources start draining away faster than a pair of newborn twins can go through a box of Pampers.

Exhaustion erodes our ability to communicate. Good communication requires taking a deep breath, vetoing the first three sarcastic statements that come into our sleep-deprived brains and then speaking much more nicely than we're feeling. Now that takes energy.

In addition, 10% to 15% of mothers go through postpartum depression, which can hinder the ability to enjoy marriage and child rearing for both partners. Thus, problems can develop from depression that are separate from the more predictable stresses of child rearing.

Here are a few steps you can take to improve your situation.

Make your marriage a priority

Too many well-meaning couples put all of their energy into providing stimulation and attention for their twins while their marriages wither in the background. While young kids need to be with a responsible, caring adult, that person doesn't have to be you, at least every single minute of the day. Guilt and over-responsibility can cause us to believe we're hurting our twins if we take time away from them to be alone with our mates. So, try to get out once a week as a couple and do some of the things you used to do before kids. If you can't find a sitter, try to do an exchange with other parents. Kids flourish with parents who are happy as individuals and happy together.

Go out without your spouse

Marriages are stressed when one or both spouses feel too deprived by the trials of parenting twins. Having down time without our spouses allows us to replenish our resources so we have more to give to our mates and our kids.

Work out a plan where you get down time when your spouse gets home from work and on the weekends. Alternate who gets up early on the weekend so one of you gets to sleep in, work out or enjoy a hobby. I know it can be hard to get out of the house but it will be worth the effort. Finally, focus on activities that leave you feeling nurtured and replenished; errands and chores don't qualify.

Appreciate, appreciate, appreciate

Tell your partner every day that you value what he or she is doing for you or the family. Or, simply say what you love, admire or value about him or her as a person. Because you both are working hard, there is plenty of room to feel undervalued and under-

appreciated. Parents who are home with the kids can feel cut off from meaningful adult contact and stimulation, while parents who are the primary breadwinners can feel like their day never ends if they take over for the rest of the evening once they come home. Stay current with your partner's thoughts, feelings and dreams.

Avoid isolation at all costs

Get online, join support groups, call friends, get out. Isolation can put too many demands on the other spouse to meet our needs. The more support we have, the less alone and trapped we feel.

Avoid destructive fights

You don't have the time or energy and it's not going to get you anywhere, anyway. Communicate your feelings in a non-blaming manner. I know it's hard to do when you're running on empty. Nonetheless, try to explain your feelings or requests in a non-critical way. Agree on a time that works for both of you to settle differences. Emphasize what your partner is doing right before you say what you'd like your spouse to work on. Try to keep it positive and agree that you'll take timeouts if it starts feeling unproductive. If you need to vent, tell your spouse that you need to get something off your chest and you'd like him or her to just listen and not problem-solve. And keep it short. ♡

Joshua Coleman, Ph.D., a psychologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area, is the father of twin sons and a daughter. He is the author of *Imperfect Harmony: How to Stay Married for the Sake of the Children and Still Be Happy* (St. Martin's Press). Visit his Web site, www.drjoshucoleman.com, where you can subscribe to his free marriage e-letter.

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Revised Ed. *Barbara Luke, S.C.D., M.P.H., R.D.*

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Newly revised and updated, Dr. Barbara Luke of the University of Miami School of Medicine and mother of twins Tamara Eberlein provide specific, empowering information for parents of multiples about health care providers, diet, activity and rest restrictions, preterm labor, and post-pregnancy feeding and care. Also included are 50 nutritious recipes for optimal birth weight of the multiple children, and numerous charts, graphs and illustrations. Appendices include helpful resources for new parents of multiples and a detailed glossary. Paperback, 420 pages.



Everything You Need to Know to Have a Healthy Twin Pregnancy

Gilia Leiter, M.D.; Rachel Kranz \$15.95

Dr. Leiter is a mother of twins and an OB/Gyn herself. Offers practical information, and detailed resources when expecting twins. Paperback, 330 pages.



The Pregnancy Bed Rest Book

A Survival Guide for Expectant Mothers and Their Families

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Information on everything from notifying your employer and working with your health insurer to proper nutrition and calisthenics. Guide helps you adjust to horizontal living and get back on your feet. Extensive resources list. Paperback, 229 pages.



The Multiple Pregnancy Sourcebook

Nancy Bowers, RN, BSN \$17.95

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



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Revised third edition bursts with details about multiple pregnancy, birthing experience, postpartum, and caring for twins at home. Chapters on prenatal psychology, premature delivery, twin bonding. Paperback, 562 pages.

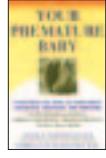


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This author and mom of twins recognized that raising twins wouldn't be easy. In her multiples birthing class, she met a group of women who weathered their pregnancies together and became close friends. Lyons and her "multiple sorority" survive the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



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 photographing 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.



Double Duty: The parents' guide to raising twins, from pregnancy through school years

Christina Baglivi Tinglof \$14.95

Real-life solutions, parent-tested suggestions and expert advice on everything from pregnancy-related weight gain to whether or not to put the children in the same class in school. Each chapter has a "top 5" list of tips. Paperback, 201 pages.



TWINS! Pregnancy, birth, and the first year of life

Connie Agnew, M.D.; Alan Klein, M.D.

Jill Alison Ganon \$18.00

Read about physical, medical, emotional and psychological issues, with an emphasis on twin-specific issues and a month-to-month guide for the first year. Paperback, 320 pages.



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Karen Kerhoff Gromada \$14.95

La Leche League guide covers first feeding efforts in the hospital, avoiding problems, full vs. partial breastfeeding, going public and juggling other duties. Paperback, 352 pages.



Mothering Twins: Advice and support from five moms who've been there and lived to tell the tale

\$14.00

Five moms of twins offer many worked-for-me solutions to myriad situations unique to caring for twins. Insightful moms speak from the heart in terms you'll understand. Paperback, 414 pages.



Twins, Triplets and More

Their Nature, Development and Care

Elizabeth M. Bryan \$6.95

Classic guide to parenting twins and higher order multiples. Provides helpful resolutions to parenting issues unique to multiple children. Paperback, 138 pages.



Your Baby's First Year

Glade B. Curtis, M.D.

and Judith Schuler, M.S.

\$16.00

Full of helpful information, this book's weekly format allows the parent of newborn children to follow their development over a 52-week period. While every child is unique, the data contained in the book provides guidelines to the development of children. Paperback, 544 pages.



I Sleep at Red Lights

Bruce Stockler

\$13.95

Every parent of multiples will identify with Bruce Stockler's hilarious adventures with his triplet babies. Bruce is the primary parent for his four kids, who include a slightly older singleton son. Bruce is a former stand-up comic who worked as a joke writer for Jay Leno. He is laugh-out-loud funny, and tends to see the funny and positive side to absolutely any horrific situation. As you know, with twins or triplets, there are a good many of those! Paperback, 336 pages.



Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior

Nancy Segal, Ph.D.

\$18.50

Leading twin researcher and monzygotic (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.



Two at a Time

Jane Seymour; Pamela Patrick Novotny \$14.00

Reading this is like talking across a table over coffee with award-winning star Seymour about pregnancy, birth, life at home. Lists, answers to common questions. Paperback, 205 pages.



The Art of Parenting Twins

Patricia Malmstrom, M.A.

\$14.00

Pat Malmstrom, founder of Twin Services, Inc., has adult twins and holds degrees in early childhood education and special ed. Highly readable. Covers organizing your home, breastfeeding, "twins Shock," developmental delays, identity issues. Paperback, 333 pages.



The Joy of Twins: Having, raising, and loving babies who arrive in groups

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Beautiful collection of photographs and short essays celebrating twinship—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.



How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

Adele Faber; Elaine Mazlish

\$12.50

Contemporary classic that every parent needs to read, about parent/child communications. Supportive, friendly, and, above all, effective. Elicits cooperation from children better than all the yelling and pleading in the world. Paperback, 286 pages.



Keys to Parenting Multiples

Karen Kerhoff Gromada;

Mary C. Hurlbert

\$7.95

Practical help for nurturing multiples from birth through childhood. Covers breastfeeding, individuality, combined energy, toilet learning, school development. Paperback, 216 pages.



To place an order, call (888) 55-TWINS, go online or use the order form in this issue.

The Multiples Manual: Preparing and Caring for Twins or Triplets
Lynn Lorenz \$13.95

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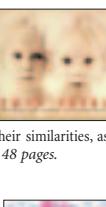
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Speed Sex

When Alex and I were expecting the twins, all of our parent friends warned us that we'd be sleepy all of the time, we'd never read books anymore, we wouldn't have any free time, and our sex life would deteriorate. As Alex often tells people, when parents of twins ask each other if they're getting any, they're referring to sleep.

During the second trimester, we flew to Bermuda for our last romantic getaway prior to parenthood. We stayed at a scenic inn overlooking the ocean where most of our fellow guests were about 30 years older than we were and cared about only one activity during their vacation—golf. Right up until our departure date, I was trying to find out if it would be OK for Alex and me to have sex during our vacation. I never did find out.

When I asked my reproductive endocrinologist and my ob/gyn about sex restrictions during pregnancy, they dodged the question and changed the topic. Most of the popular pregnancy books suggested that sex was OK during a normal pregnancy until the last six weeks, but a twin pregnancy was not considered normal. It was high-risk. When you're expected to deliver early, you don't really know when the last six weeks are going to be.

My friends gave me a variety of responses.

"Oh yeah," one said, "we were having sex right up until my due date."

Another friend said her doctor recommended sex as an alternative to inducing labor medicinally when she went past her due date. Some friends said sex was the last thing on their minds; their backs ached all the time, they were nauseous for nine

months and they had completely lost interest in their husbands during the pregnancy. A few people said they had had miscarriages before getting pregnant and didn't want to risk any more problems.

So I went back to my ob/gyn for answers, and she said, "Orgasms cause the uterus to contract."

"Well, is that OK in the first or second trimester?" I asked.

encouraged abstinence for new reasons. With nine or 10 feedings a day per child, we couldn't stay awake long enough to have sex. We talked about it, remembered enjoying it and then tried to sleep for an hour before the next feeding session. At one point, Alex rolled over, peeled off his drool-stained shirt and said, "I feel about as sexy as asbestos." Around this time, we saw a cable-television monologue by a famous comedian and father of twins, Ray Romano, who said the only time he and his wife had sex was when their quarterly taxes were due. Each served as a sort of reminder for the other. But Alex and I were determined not to let parenthood destroy our libidos indefinitely.

About four months into parenthood, we considered inviting Alex's parents over to babysit so we could hide upstairs and have some uninterrupted time to ourselves. We couldn't go through with this plan, so we resorted to speed sex between feedings. Having children didn't obliterate our sex life during the first year of parenthood; it just made us remarkably efficient.

To this day, we continue to fantasize about the time when we can go to an inn for an entire weekend. Doesn't have to be in an exotic location; Virginia would suffice. We'll recruit a few grandparents for babysitting duty because it's always easier when the adults outnumber the children. We'll indulge in a long, slow dinner complemented by a smooth bottle of Pinot Noir, and we'll try to get to know each other again. ♪



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY PETERSON

My doctor smiled condescendingly and avoided answering the question.

"What about intercourse without orgasms?" I asked. She laughed and mumbled something about how intercourse could cause spotting. I pressed her for a more specific answer, "What about orgasms without intercourse?" She changed the subject. I sensed that she didn't know the answers.

We didn't want to take any unnecessary risks. I told my ob/gyn that giving up sex and sushi probably were the toughest sacrifices of pregnancy.

The first three months of parenthood

Lauren Kafka reflects on the first year with her twins, now 6, from her home in Bethesda, Md.

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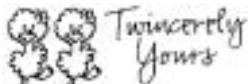
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Got twin skin?

by Sharon Withers

Vowed to get rid of it this year?

Many moms of twins battle the floppy flap that hangs over the jeans long after the births of their babies. The “twin skin” club is exclusive and members love to share their strategies in toning the tummy. So keep talking and start crunching. Either way, misery loves company and you’ve got lots of it.

If there’s one thing any mother of multiples can testify to, it’s this: Your body is never the same after carrying more than one baby in the same pregnancy. Many complain about “twin skin,” some learn to love it, but most want to leave it behind.

Here are some of the remarks moms have made. (No one, however, was willing to have her name mentioned.)

- “I’m going to wrap it around my middle and use it as belt.”
- “If movie stars can use duct tape for body control, and I duct tape diapers, I think I’ll just duct tape my belly in place.”
- “I am back to a size 6... but the ‘twin skin’ just won’t shrink.”
- “I’m having a tummy tuck.”
- “Losing the 72 pounds I gained was a piece of cake—OK, a piece of carrot—but this ‘twin skin’ is impossible to budge.”
- “I have lost all my weight and no one would ever guess what my tummy looks like, but what do I do when I want to put on a swim suit?”
- “My husband says he doesn’t even notice it. He’s the best.”
- “If you have ‘twin skin’ you have to have a sense of humor.”
- “When I lie down, it’s me and my ‘twin skin’; when I roll over, it follows me.”

Is there a solution?

Dr. Roger Goldberg, author of *Ever Since I Had My Baby* and researcher into the postpartum changes a woman’s body undergoes, cautions women to give themselves some time after their babies are born. “The general rule is, don’t judge from the immediate postpartum appearance,” Dr. Goldberg counseled. “Watch and wait for at least three to six months.”

Dr. Goldberg explained that estrogen levels plummet during breastfeeding. When estrogen rebounds, the skin may regain some

elasticity. While he says there is not any specific supporting scientific research, he bases his advice on what happens to the pelvic floor postpartum during breastfeeding: The vaginal skin becomes thinner and drier.

In moms of multiples, the ‘six-pack’ muscles can separate and spread. Only rarely, in the more extreme cases, do the muscles never fully return to midline. If you are considering a tummy tuck, Dr. Goldberg offers some very simple and practical advice about this extreme surgery: “Wait until you’ve had your last baby.”

Many “twin skin” veterans swear by Pilates because it strengthens the body’s core. You will find a wide choice of Pilates videos and DVDs at your favorite store. Other moms say their “twin skin” tightened by simply doing crunches and modified sit-ups at home. (Avoid two-leg raises and full sit-ups; they place too much strain on your back.)

In her books *Having Twins* and *Essential Exercises for the Childbearing Years*, Elizabeth Noble offers detailed information and illustrations on prenatal and post-partum exercises—and assurance that “twin skin” need not be permanent.

She recommends that when you are expecting, you should avoid strenuous exercise, but try stretching, walking, swimming, low-impact aerobics and calisthenics.

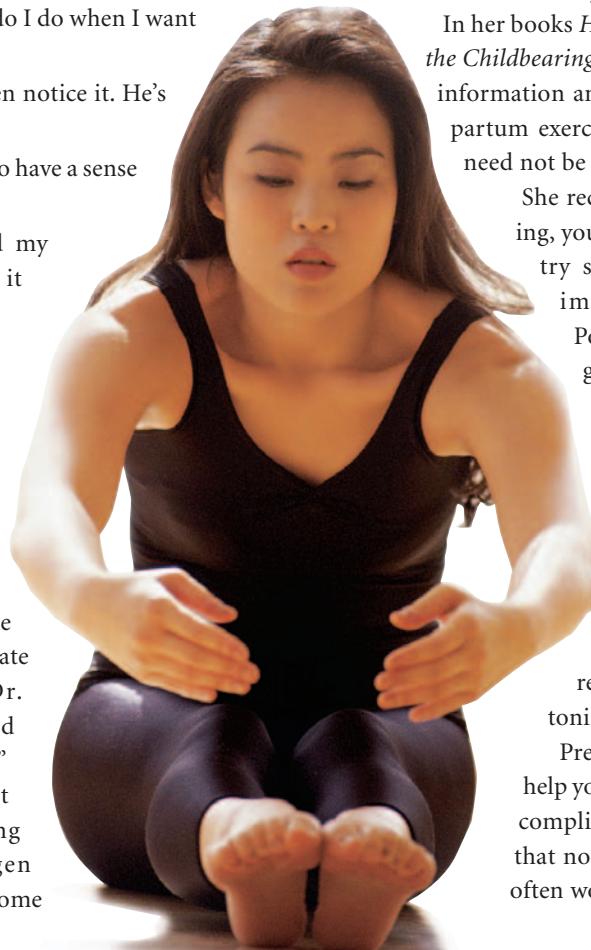
Postpartum, resume your prenatal program gradually and include isometrics and pelvic floor exercises. Noble writes:

First you shorten your abdominal muscles, then you strengthen them.

Also, Noble suggests that you try hacking—a quick light chopping with the outer border of your hand—to tighten stretched skin.

Regardless of how you get your reps in, take comfort in the Ts: Tummy toning after twins is tough and tiring.

Pre-pregnancy and prenatal exercises can help you stay in shape, if you don’t experience complications. Although it sometimes seems that nothing helps, a pound of prevention is often worth several pounds of “twin skin.”





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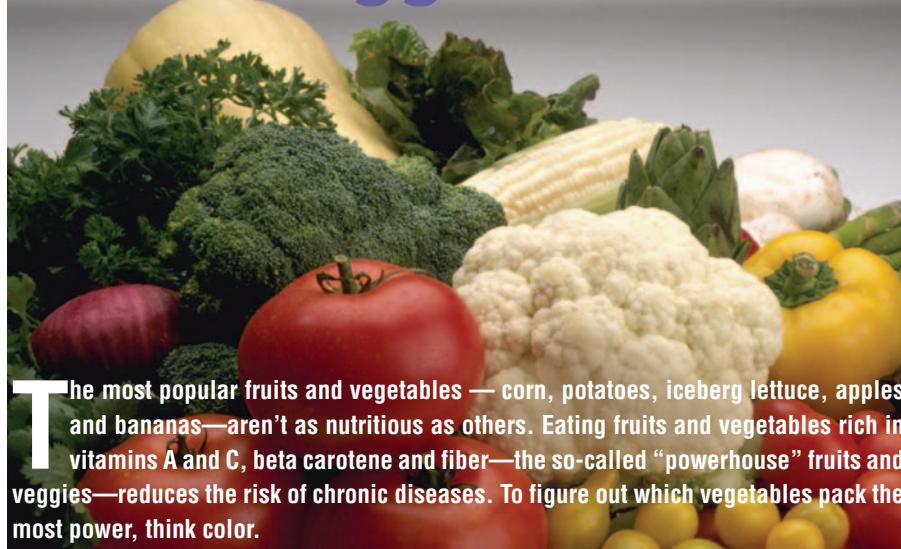
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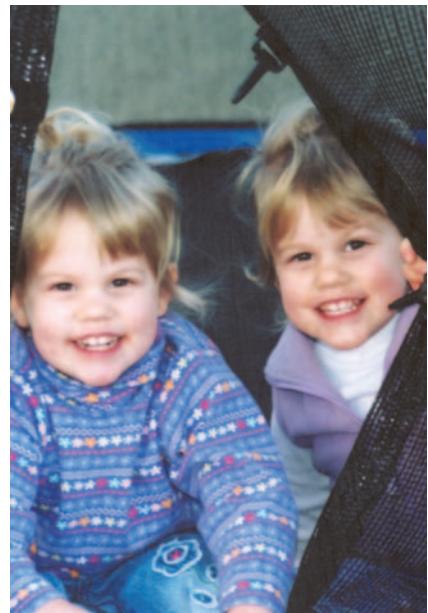


The most popular fruits and vegetables — corn, potatoes, iceberg lettuce, apples and bananas—aren't as nutritious as others. Eating fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins A and C, beta carotene and fiber—the so-called “powerhouse” fruits and veggies—reduces the risk of chronic diseases. To figure out which vegetables pack the most power, think color.

Color:	Choose more often:	Instead of:
White	Cauliflower	Potatoes, onions, mushrooms
Green	Dark lettuces such as romaine and red leaf, spinach, broccoli and Brussels sprouts	Iceberg lettuce, green beans
Yellow/orange	Carrots, winter squashes, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, oranges and grapefruit	Corn or bananas
Red	Tomatoes, red peppers and strawberries	Apples

—Saint Louis University School of Public Health

KINDLE CREATIVITY



Katherine and Samantha, 2 years, 8 months

- Make up stories that you and each twin can take turns building.
- Blanket forts in the family room can take children to places only they can imagine.
- Stock a dress-up box.
- Write pictograph letters: Cut up magazine pictures and paste your pictures to a sheet of paper that you mail to granny, an aunt or cousin.
- Form a family band. Use pots and pans, spoons, wooden utensils and other household items as your instruments.
- Designate a “Silly Clothes Day” at your house.
- Have a “Backward Day.” Wear your clothes backward, eat breakfast at dinnertime and look for tasks you can do backward.

RSV or the flu?

You may feel relieved that the flu season is coming to a close, but stay on your guard against respiratory syncytical virus, RSV.

Unlike influenza, the RSV season runs from fall to spring and most children are exposed to the virus during the first two years of life. Premature babies and children with chronic lung conditions or congenital heart disease are at increased risk for severe RSV disease. For at-risk babies, doctors may prescribe the preventive Synagis, preventive injections given monthly throughout the RSV season.

RSV spreads easily and can become very serious very quickly. Both influenza and RSV can attack the respiratory system, so

check with your pediatrician if your babies—especially preemies—come down with fever, runny nose, cold-like symptoms and, more seriously, coughing, difficult breathing, rapid breathing or wheezing.

The best defense is simple: Always wash your hands before touching your babies, keep them away from crowds, avoid exposure to people with cold or flu symptoms and keep them away from second-hand smoke. When out in public, tuck one of the alcohol-based hand sanitizers into your handbag or diaper bag. You don't want to be the one to bring a virus home to your preemies.

Visit www.rsvprevention.com or www.rsvinfo.com for more information.

Drowning in diapers

Your twins may go through as many as 8,000 diapers before they are toilet trained. Short of making a trip to the dustbin in the alley after every diaper change, how do you get rid of all those diapers and keep your nursery tidy and smelling sweet?

As we all know, you have a choice of disposal systems. But do they work? *The Wall Street Journal* tested five diaper disposal systems to find out if the manufacturers delivered on their promises. Here's what they found.

- **Diaper Dekor Plus** Good looks and easy to use; in fact, so easy to use, a toddler can open it
- **Safety 1st Neat!** Great odor control but requires two hands to dispose of a diaper
- **Playtex Diaper Genie** Perfumed bag and stinky diaper combo can be "funky;" using it is hard on your back
- **Diaper Champ** Takes any garbage bag; side latch hard to open
- **Home Logic Step-On Wastebasket** Cheap, low tech solution but stinky

—*The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 28, 2004

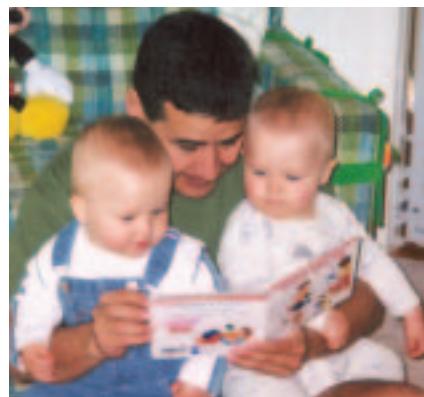
Bedtime boss

If your twins struggle with a going-to-bed routine, take photographs of them bathing, putting on their pajamas, brushing their teeth, reading a book and snuggling under the covers—or whatever they do to prepare for bed. Create a "bedtime" poster and let the poster be the boss.

Messy KIDS

You are your kids' most important role model. They notice how tidy or messy you are. So make sure your twins see you cleaning up after yourself. Even toddlers pick up on adult behavior. Kids hear a powerful message when you "think" out loud. For example, you might say, "Now that I have straightened up, everything is in its place and I feel so much better."

—Love and Logic, www.loveandlogic.com



Miguel and Antonio, 15 months

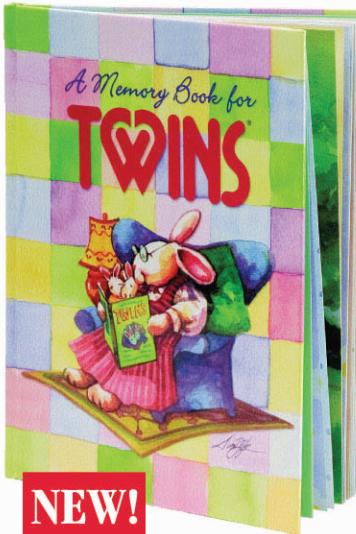
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**MY
HOW
YOU'VE
GROWN**

Measuring babies' length is a squirmy proposition. Children under 2 should be lying down. Many babies are measured by marking the paper on the exam table. A recent study found that this method resulted in errors in 66% of the babies. Many pediatricians use a length board specifically designed for measuring babies; it yields a more accurate reading. Errors in measuring can lead to mistakes in diagnosing a growth problem.

—University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

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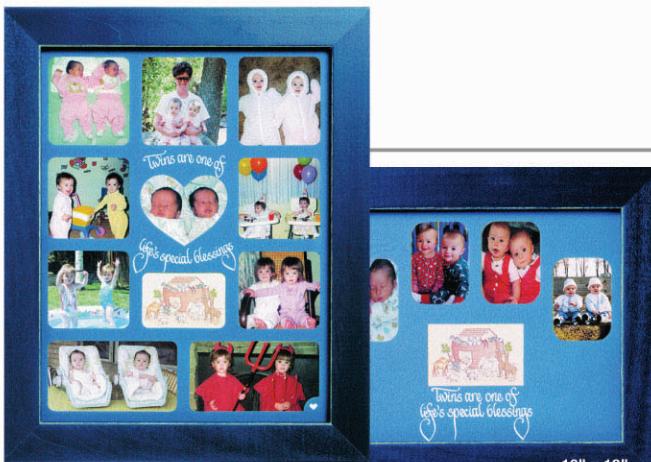


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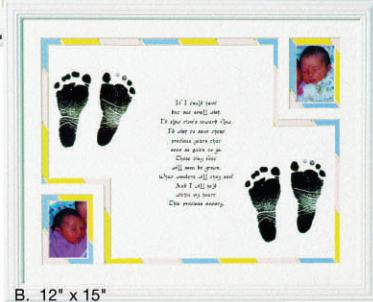
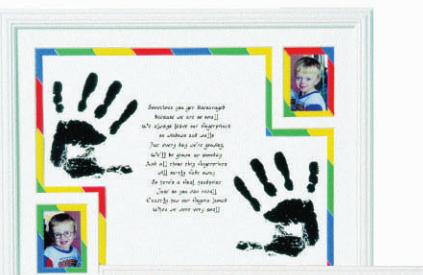
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A.



B.

These two ceramic frames from Russ Baby will look fabulous on your dresser, bookcase, shelf or fireplace mantle. The frames have glass inserts and flocked backing, each frame provides a unique opportunity to show off your twins. The Stars and Hearts frame includes spaces for two photographs to show your twins separately. The Bears and Balloons frame has room for one big photograph to show your twins together. These are beautiful, wonderful gifts to celebrate the birth of your twins for a close family member or even for yourself. Frames are individually boxed. Twice as Nice Stars and Hearts Frame is 4 1/2" x 6" and holds two 1 3/4" x 2 3/4" photographs. Twice as Nice Bears and Balloons Frame is 8 3/4" x 6 3/4" and holds one 4" x 6" photograph.

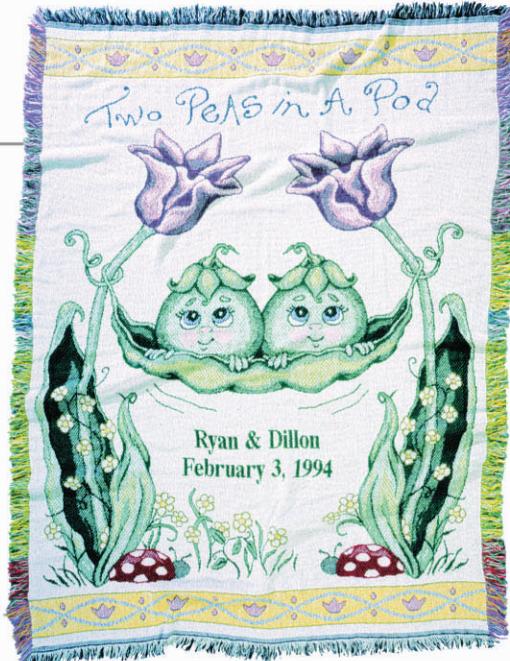
A. SF04002 Stars and Hearts \$12.99 each

B. SF04003 Bears and Balloons \$14.99 each

"Pardon Our Mess...Twins Live Here"

B. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11" x 14" overall.

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Two or more \$29.99 each



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SF90112 \$49.99 each

Be sure to include personalization information on the order form or when you order by phone.

To place an order, call (888) 55-TWINS, go online or use the order form in this issue.

Double takes

:: "Cover beauties" >>

(from TWINS® Guide to the First Year, 2004)



1:: Jenna and Alexis Rokosny
7 months
Warren, New Jersey

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?



2:: Nick and Joey
7 months
Melrose Park, IL



3:: Sanjeev and Benjamin
5 months
Greenville, South Carolina



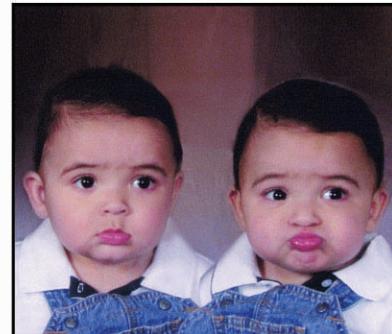
4:: Natalie and Joshua
3 years
Prattville, Alabama



5:: Emelia and Chloe
9 months
Atlanta, Georgia



6:: Karli and Kayla
3 years
Burlington, Iowa



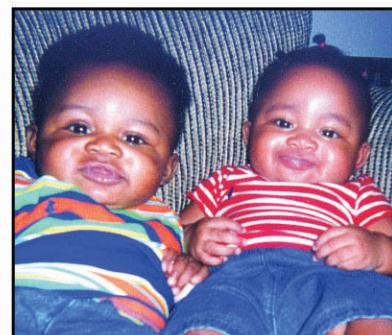
7:: Andy and Joey
10 months
Canyon Country, California



8:: Aden and Cole
2 years
Macedon, New York



9:: Chloe and Claire
3½ years
Brunswick, Georgia



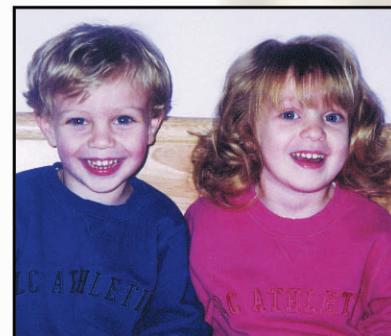
10:: Kelsi and Kameron
5 months
Gretna, Louisiana



11:: Audrey and Olivia
14 months
Mercer Island, Washington



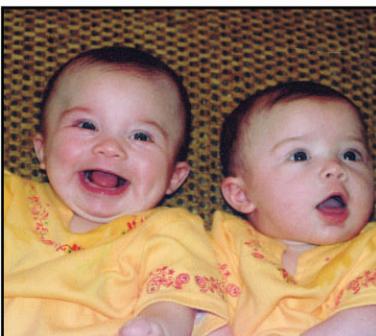
12:: Madison and Kylie
12 months
Glendora, California



13:: Aaron and Arianna
34 months
Lindenhurst, New York



14:: Madison and Morgan
8 months
Bourbon, Missouri



15:: Olivia and Mia
6 months
Lake Mary, Florida



16:: Stephen and Anthony
3 months
Staten Island, New York



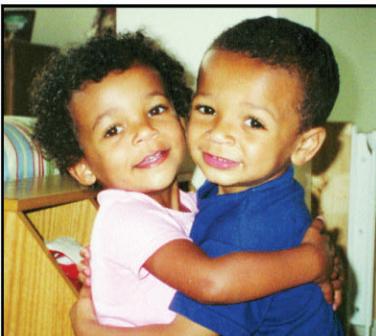
17:: Jordyn and Joseph
22 months
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida



18:: Katelyn and Haley
5 months
Lawrenceville, New Jersey



19:: Annie and Jaime
12 months
Allen, Texas



20:: Rosemary and Stephen
2½ years
West Des Moines, Iowa

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 Rd., 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 - DZ	19 - MZ	20 - DZ
13 - DZ	14 - DZ	15 - DZ	16 - UNK
9 - DZ	10 - DZ	11 - DZ	12 - DZ
5 - MZ	6 - MZ	7 - MZ	8 - DZ
1 - DZ	2 - DZ	3 - DZ	4 - DZ

Based on parental reports:

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Happy Endings

by Jennifer S. Dahlen

It gets better

I was told dozens of times that first year: It gets better. Not that I ever got it in writing. But how could so many strangers be wrong?

The first time a passerby directed those words at me, I was shopping alone with my newborn twins, wrapped in blankets and asleep in my grocery cart. Suddenly, Randy awoke with screams shrill enough to rattle jars of Gerber squash on the shelves. I swayed and patted him, but his cries escalated until his brother joined in. I plucked Christopher from the makeshift bed and cuddled both babies at my chest. Fellow shoppers scooted around us to retrieve eggs from the dairy case. Arms wrapped tightly around my hollering duo, and no place to hide, I stood as inconspicuous as a farmer at an art show clutching two roosters.

Then a sympathetic stranger came to my rescue. We settled the twins back into the cart and I thanked her. She patted my shoulder and assured me, "It gets better." I took her word for it and left without buying anything.

As my babies' first year progressed I noticed a pattern. With each double dose of infant outburst, a host of onlookers shared their opinion, "It gets better." But I had yet to experience a scream-free outing, so I wondered when does it get better?

At 10 months, with fists full of graham crackers, my twins sat for the first time side-by-side, content in the stroller. I held my breath. Could it be we had reached "better" at last? But using the double-stroller gave me

a new awareness of the distance between grocery store shelves. Peering down a row, I'd do the mental math: One double stroller, plus the length of a single baby's arm equals, "Clean up on aisle seven."

The day my 2-year-old boys walked hand-in-hand into the store, I was optimistic we'd found "better." That is, until they made a simultaneous dash in opposite directions. I recovered Randy at the candy counter, while my older kids tracked Christopher to a flat of strawberries, his puckered lips covered in sticky red juice.

My 3-year old twins were so fond of fruit, I had to navigate the produce section with caution. One look away and they'd be peeling bananas, stuffing grapes in their cheeks, or scaling a pyramid of cantaloupes. I'd gather the pair close, look them in the eye and command, "Don't touch the fruit, OK?"

With the sincerity of two raccoons eyeing a garbage can, they'd nod, only to be found minutes later tugging at opposite ends of a watermelon.

At 4, they discovered the colored tiles of the grocery store floor. "Step only on the red squares, because alligators live on the white ones," they'd agree. And so the game began. Watching the pair jump from square to square, I'd cringe at the near misses.

"Guys! Come here!" They'd come, but with pushes and pokes to feed the other to the invisible creatures.

"Let's try hands in your pockets."

"OK," they'd laugh, tangling themselves into a twisted heap on the floor, their hands plunged into each other's pockets.

I finally dismissed the idea that it would ever get better.

"Mom, I need 25 cents," 5-year-old Christopher begged.

"No, honey, you're not buying candy."

"I don't want it for candy. I just need one more quarter."

I breathed a deep sigh. "Christopher, we need to buy milk and then we're going home." His face dropped. A tear trickled down his cheek.

Randy waved a shiny coin in front of his brother's eyes. "Christopher, you can have my quarter."

"Let's go!" Christopher grabbed Randy's money and the two shot off together.

Deciding not to give chase, I went to get milk before hunting them down. Returning to the front of the store, I replayed five years and dared not imagine what catastrophe awaited me now. Just as I reached the check-out counter, the identical pair, dressed in T-shirts and denim jeans rounded the corner fingering a single pink carnation.

"Mom, this is for you!" Christopher announced, their four eyes aglow. I bent to my knees, hugged them tight in my arms and thought, it doesn't get better than this. ♡

Jennifer Dahlen is the mother of seven, including twin boys born in May 1997. She lives with her husband and children in Portland, Ore.

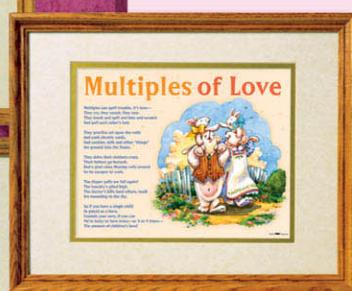
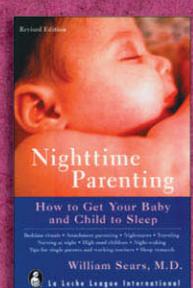
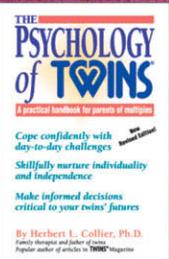
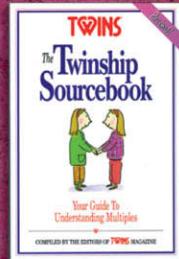
Twin Vision



by Brian and Brad Jones

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