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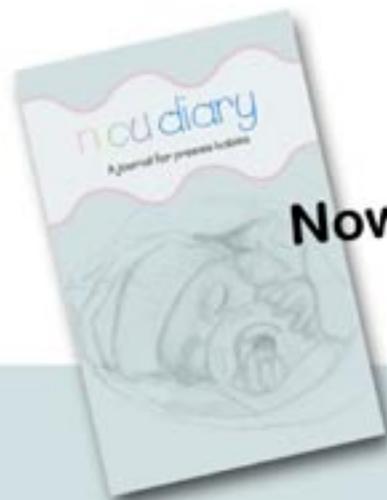


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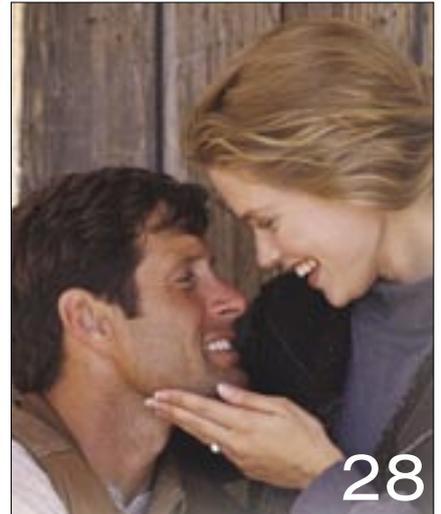
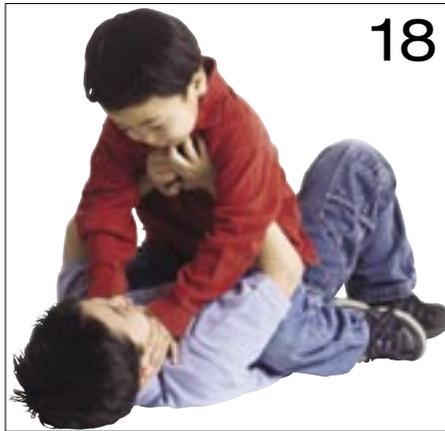
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## ON THE COVER



Avery, Jeremy and Zachary Burks, 4 years old, were born at 30 weeks gestation and weighed 2 pounds, 15 ounces; 2 pounds, 11 ounces; and 2 pounds, 6 ounces, respectively. The triplets have a younger, yet bigger brother, Spencer, 3, was also born prematurely at 34 weeks and weighed 6 pounds. People mistake them for quadruplets. Avery is a sweet, affectionate boy, who tends to be temperamental; Jeremy is fearless and tests his boundaries; Zachary is more the cautious-type who tends to be set in his ways. The four exchange as many "hits" as they do hugs and kisses

Cover Photography by Covalli Photography



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## All aboard the TTTS Train!

TWINS Magazine wants to lavish special praise on parents of twins who have suffered or survived Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome, some of whom have gone on to create amazing fund-raising efforts around the country to support TTTS research and treatment. Lonnie Somers is organizing his 2nd annual TTTS Race for Hope in Denver, and hopes to take his efforts national next year. (See In The News, page 7.)

Bernadette Archibald in Abington, MA, organized the annual Conor's Run in Williamstown, MA, five years ago in memory of her twin son who died of TTTS complications slightly less than four years after birth. Bernadette has raised some \$80,000 and has tallied over 1,600 runners and walkers in her events. She expects 500 this year, on Sept. 10 when the Run takes place. The Archibald family's Conor would be 8 now, and his twin brother Patrick, is a leading cheerleader for the family's effort.

We think this is an incredible way to turn sorrow into joy. Parents of multiples and the twins communities worldwide continually show themselves to be extraordinarily generous, loving and compassionate.

These efforts support a number of organizations, including Mary Slaman-Forsythe's TTTS Foundation, dedicated to education, early diagnosis, help for expectant mothers, treatment for the condition and support for families during and after birth. Mary launched her 501(c)3 foundation after losing one of her babies to TTTS in 1989.

TWINS believes this is the best cause imaginable. We urge everyone to support these runs and make pledges, and to support the TTTS Foundation.

I readily admit that other parents of twins and other twin conditions are equally deserving. Yet, TTTS is unique to twins and parents of twins. We want to lend our special support nationally and internationally to the education of parents, treatment of babies and extension of medical technology in this arena. Many tiny lives are being saved every single day with early diagnosis of TTTS and improved treatment, including surgery, that corrects TTTS in utero and helps families keep both babies alive.

We're putting our money where our mouth is! For every new or renewal TWINS subscription we receive between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 2005, we will set aside \$1 to donate to TTTS-related causes, including the runs, the TTTS Foundation and possibly St. Joseph's Medical Research, where Dr. Julian DeLia, founder of TTTS laser surgery, is on staff. We'll let you know the results of our efforts in a future issue.



*Susan Alt*  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

## TECHIE TWINS

### Results from an e-poll of TWINS Magazine e-zine subscribers and Message Board members

- Average age to start using a computer: 3 years
- Most children under the age of 6 used only kiddie computer software and were not online.
- Only one person reported using "nanny" software; one wrote "not yet."
- All parents stated that they are concerned about adult content on the Internet.
- 50% of parents with children under the age of 2 reported that their twins did not watch any TV or videos.
- One parent of 2-year-olds reported that the children did not watch any TV or videos.

### Of the twins who watch TV and videos:

Age	TV avg./day	Video avg./day
Under 2	1.45 hours	.96 hours
2	1.25	.5
3	1.5	2
4	1.65	.82
5+	1	.5

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Jennifer Martinez, (l.) holds her 7-month-old twin son Aiden and her identical twin sister, Carin Behringer, (r.), holds Aiden's identical twin brother, Ethan.

## Set No. 7

Identical twins Carin and Jennifer Fischer were born in 1977 and grew up in Virginia Beach, Va. Their mother did not know she was

having twins until she was admitted to the hospital at 32 weeks with toxemia for an emergency Caesarean section.

Each girl weighed just slightly over 2 pounds. Carin spent 9 weeks in the NICU at Portsmouth Naval Hospital, and Jennifer stayed 11 weeks. Although healthy, they were small and fragile.

Jennifer is the seventh person on her mom's side to have twins. Many of the twins—including both identical and fraternal sets—died during or shortly after birth, however, because they were born more than 50 years ago.

Aidan and Ethan were born Dec. 6, 2004, at 35½ weeks. Aidan weighed 5 pounds and Ethan weighed 5 pounds, 2 ounces. They stayed in the NICU for 12 and 14 days, respectively, and were sent home when they were gaining weight and eating consistently.

"Besides my husband Matt, Carin is my best friend," said Jennifer. "It's touching to know that Aiden and Ethan will share the same bond that my sister and I do. Words cannot describe how special our twins are to us. We feel so incredibly blessed to have been given twins. How interesting it will be if Carin and her husband Josh have twins, too... we're hopeful."



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### Loyal supporters

We hardly read TWINS Magazine anymore (because the twins are grown), but my husband Mark and I feel that by supporting the magazine, we also are supporting parents of twins. We donate the issues to our local library.

Denise McKenney

Grand Junction, Colo.

*Editor's Note: Thank you for supporting families with twins! We applaud your loyalty.*

I'm writing you this letter because I think your magazine is wonderful! We finally have twins in our family. I was on the Internet looking for a gift to buy my cousin for her baby shower when I found your Web site. After reading your magazine online, I had to subscribe for my cousin. She delivered early and let me tell you, the articles in your magazine have helped her a lot. Thank you very much for the great magazine. Keep up the good work.

Albert C. Cervantes

Alhambra, Calif.

### A special mom

I am the single mom to Chase and Connor, special needs identical twin boys with cerebral palsy. I also work part-time. I have been blessed with wonderful family and friends. Your past two issues have taken into account both of these issues. I know I am not the only one out there, so these articles were helpful to me. Thank you.

Lisa Panish

Largo, Fla.

### Zygosity questions

I am a 41-year-old female with a male twin. We are a normal girl and a normal boy, but we are monozygotic twins. People have a lot of trouble believing this. Can you tell me where I can find more information on this and how rare this is? I have searched and searched and cannot find answers.

Maria Mendillo

via e-mail

*Editor's Note: It is very rare, indeed, but possible.*

*We ran an article by fetal pathologist Geoffrey Machin, M.D. on the topic and the article is posted on our Web site. Part of the confusion comes from the popular use of the term "identical." Twins are never truly identical; they simply come from one (mono) egg and are properly called monozygotic (MZ). Some MZ twins genetically differ from each other. This means that, although they originally had the genetic composition of their original fertilized egg, one of them has undergone a genetic change during very early embryonic development. This could involve a whole chromosome, part of a chromosome or a change in a gene. Visit [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) to read the complete article.*

I was told my boys are dizygotic because they were each in a separate sac at the seven-week ultrasound. But your Web site states: "Sometimes physicians will predict whether twins are identical based upon an examination of the placenta(s), but this is much less likely to be accurate." They also show a lot of mirroring, which your site says is common in identical twins. Could I possibly have identical twins here?

Patty Taylor

Via e-mail

*Editor's Note: It sounds as if your boys could be monozygotic ("identical"). Several labs that advertise in this magazine perform swab and blood testing. I would try the swab test first.*

### Twin empathy

I am 39 years old and have a twin sister who is one minute older than I. Twelve years ago when I found out I was pregnant, my husband and I decided not to tell anyone. My sister got morning sickness every day for eight weeks until she found out I was pregnant; then it stopped. She also had contractions the night before I went into labor. When she was pregnant she also had morning sickness, but I didn't. She is what is called the receiver and I am the sender. It has been a lot of fun being twins.

Renee Ventura

Via e-mail

## Urban Double twin stroller saves NYC baby's life

Mountain Buggy by Sycamore Kids, a longtime TWINS Magazine advertiser, found itself in the spotlight when its super-durable twin side-by-side stroller appeared to save a baby's life in the unexpected collapse of a Manhattan building being demolished July 15.

The Urban Double stroller, which sells for about \$600, collapsed into itself when a steel beam fell across the stroller's handle, creating a cocoon that saved 7-month-old Abigail Lurensky. The *New York Times* ran a news story that characterized the stroller as "the Hummer of the Sidewalk SUV set."

"The Lurenskys had purchased the Urban Double about eight months earlier," said Alan Jurysta, president of Sycamore Kids Inc., exclusive importer of the 35-pound strollers. "I never dreamed something like this could happen, and I know you cannot possibly design for such an incident. As I understand it, the sun hood was in its down position, and that provided some shelter for the baby. The Urban Double is designed to collapse into itself in order to minimize harm to the child. (Some strollers collapse outward, which can throw a child out of the stroller.) The baby wore the seatbelt, also. It helped that the folding mechanism is located below the feet of the children. If the stroller had folded at the midsection like some strollers do, it might have resulted in a very different outcome."

Initial news stories stated that the stroller was being returned to Sycamore Kids for testing in order to determine what engineering factors actually protected the baby from injury or death. But Jurysta told TWINS that the stroller itself hasn't been recovered from the pile of rubble, and that it may have been



thrown in the trash or been stolen following the incident.

Tritec Manufacturing in Lower Hutt, New Zealand, makes the strollers.



Mira Chan holds her 5-year-old twin boys Jonah (l.) and Patrick (r.) Fourchalk.

## Making a difference

Mira Chan has twin boys and you'd think she'd be busy enough just raising them. Add to the mix their autism, and the fact that she has them in separate preschool programs and you'd think "Wow, I hope she's got a good support system." But, she is the biggest part of the support system for

other people who are parents of multiples. She's president of the Vancouver chapter of the Multiple Births Association, Vancouver Twins and More, and she's just been honored with the Making a Difference Award from the Multiple Births Association.

"Mira has a way of bringing volunteers together to work toward a common purpose, of recognizing the potential of each of the volunteers, and helping each one to develop and feel good about her contribution. She is focused yet relaxed; she is business-like yet ever so human. She works tirelessly," said Linda Leonard, associate professor at University of British Columbia's school of nursing. "It is patently clear that it is not "her" group but "our" group, that is, the members' group."

In addition to her volunteer work, Mira and two other mothers created Fun-In-A-Box Canada, a company that develops creative learning and play activities for strengthening a child's developmental skills ([www.funinaboxcanada.com](http://www.funinaboxcanada.com)). The themed activity kits come with supplies and instructions for crafts for two children, games, songs, poems, snack/meal ideas and inside and outside adventures to last a week. Each activity within the kit focuses on at least one specific developmental skill: fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, social/language/creative or sensory. The kits are just one more way that Mira steps up to the challenge of finding a way to make others' lives easier.

"I feel very honored that the Vancouver Twins and More Club team and I were recognized this year for our efforts," Mira said. "Even with everyone's varying schedules, responsibilities and lifestyles, our executives and volunteers have committed to developing a cohesive and thriving club."

"Special thanks to Linda whose volunteer commitment to our multiple birth families not only legitimizes Vancouver Twins and More Club but also offers me personal motivation and energy." ►

**TWINS Magazine is tops**

TWINS Magazine has been named one of the Top 50 Magazines in the nation by *The Chicago Tribune's* Tempo staff.

For the third straight year, 23 staffers and contributors to *The Chicago Tribune* Tempo section conducted their own survey of which magazines they thought most appealing, most readable and most informative. *The Tribune's* Tempo staff started this annual effort to augment the annual National Magazine Awards competition for best magazine from among some 17,500 titles. *The Tribune's* Tempo staff mulls over many contenders and comes up with a list of favorites that, in the words of Amy Dickinson, Tempo Editor, capture the heart and "frankly, fire us up." The list's titles range from popular to esoteric.

TWINS Magazine, the only parenting magazine named to the 2005 list, came in at No. 38. TWINS was described as quirky for insisting on using the terms monozygotic and dizygotic instead of the more common identical and fraternal to describe twin-types, "but in a world of slick prefab parenting magazines, TWINS has personality to spare," said the comments by Tempo editors.

The top 10 magazines on *The Chicago Tribune's* 2005 list are, in order: Blender, National Geographic Traveler, Vanity Fair, Wired, Cook's Illustrated, New York, People, Vogue, People en Espanol and Metropolis.

**Events**

**The International Twins Association** will hold its 71st convention in Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 2 through Sept. 5. A "Double Trouble Golf Tournament" kicks off the weekend that includes a riverboat cruise, live performance of Hee Haw, twin judging contest and much more. For more information, e-mail co-presidents Geneva Pettit or her twin Jeanette Meadows at gaptwin2@msn.com and jemtwin@aol.com, respectively.

**The TTTS Race for Hope** is slated for Nov. 13 at Washington Park in Denver.



PHOTO: MAIN STREET PORTRAITS

Ashley (l.) and Aspen, TTTS survivors of Race for Hope organizers Lonnie and Michelle Somers, are healthy 2-year-olds today

Events include a 5K Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run. You don't have to live in Denver to participate. Go to [www.TTTSRaceforHope.org](http://www.TTTSRaceforHope.org) and choose one, two or three ways to support the event. Everyone who signs up for the online National Pledge Drive and raises \$100 will receive a free event T-shirt or a dinner gift certificate. Those who raise over \$250 also will be eligible for the grand prize drawing. You also can buy a red sili-

cone wristband to support the fight against TTTS, or a commemorative charm with the TTTS Race for Hope baby feet logo. The proceeds from all three fundraisers will benefit the TTTS Foundation and the Florida Institute for Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy.

The TTTS Race for Hope is expanding to Orlando, Fla., and Charlotte, N.C., within the next year. ♡



Runners leave the start line in the 2004 TTTS Race for Hope in Denver.

## Don't dawdle!



My 5-year-old twin girls seem to try to control their environment by being slow. They dawdle when eating their breakfast or putting on their clothes. I ask them to put on their shoes and five minutes later they haven't done it. It's incredibly frustrating when we have to be somewhere at a certain time. How can I positively motivate them to speed things up so we can get to places on time without being in a big rush and frustrated?



Dawdling can drive a parent to distraction. And once your twins learn that they can push a hot button, they won't let up. Dawdling is normal for preschoolers. By school age they should outgrow it. Your girls sound as if they may be using procrastination to their own benefit. Pushing and prodding seldom helps. This will take some re-training. Try these tactics.

Don't rush. Allow ample time for yourself to get ready and to help them. Children need help completing tasks.

Give only one instruction at a time. Get down on their level and make eye contact when you tell them what you want them to do.

Turn off the TV; it is a great distractor.

Discuss ahead of time what needs to be done in order to go somewhere. Get their agreement and enlist their help.

Remain calm when you see that they are procrastinating. Offer helpful directions or lend a hand.

Use a timer. If they are playing with toys, give them a five-minute warning: "You will have to stop playing and put your toys away in five minutes." Set a timer. Then tell them they have five minutes to pick up the toys. Set a timer again. After the toys are picked up, tell them they have five minutes to put on their shoes. Set a timer. If they have not put on their shoes, tell them you won't be going to the movie or the mall today.

Praise their efforts to cooperate.

For November/December: Send us your thoughts!

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

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Brad and Jake, 3 days old

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## Ask the doctor

**Q** A friend and I take my 10-month-old twins to the swimming pool each week. The pool is filled with toddlers. One of my twins gulps the pool water. Will this hurt her?

**A** At 10 months of age children don't know to keep their mouths closed. Certainly, one concern when taking your children swimming, or even in the bathtub, is they will swallow an excess amount of water. A few gulps won't hurt. Large amounts of water can fill the stomach rapidly and occasionally cause vomiting—just from upsetting the stomach. Although rare, a large amount of water—equal to several 8-ounce glasses of water—in a short period of time potentially can cause a salt imbalance. This could happen over a half-hour period. A greater concern with many little children in a pool is stooling. Chlorine keeps the water clean, but doesn't necessarily kill all the bacteria. Don't swim if your twin has diarrhea, and if you observe a stooling accident in the pool, get out of the water and ask the lifeguard to clean the pool. Observe your children closely—one-on-one care for those under 3 years of age—in the pool, enjoy your outing and don't worry about a few gulps of water.

**Q** My 9-month-old identical twin boys are breast-feeding and seem healthy. One, however, refuses to eat any solid food. Could it be because they were preemies? Why would one identical twin eat solids and the other refuse them? What can I do to interest him in solids? My pediatrician says not to worry, but I do.

**A** Babies have an innate sense of how to take a breast or bottle, but eating is a learned behavior—a complex activity that involves coordinating tongue and mouth, and swallowing without choking. Any preemie

may take a few months longer than a full-term baby to achieve any developmental milestone, including the ability to take solid foods. Because eating is a slowly acquired behavior, it is not uncommon for even identical twins to develop this skill at different times. Both children should be able to eat solids by 1 year of age. As long as your son is thriving—growing and gaining weight—don't worry about solids. Breast milk still is the primary source of a child's calories during the first year. In the second half of the first year, taking solid food is really practice. Continue to offer the opportunity to eat solid foods at regular intervals and they'll learn to eat.

**Q** My 10-month-old twin girls seem like they have been teething for months, but still don't have any teeth. They've also had stuffy, runny noses during the same months. Is it true that teething can cause runny noses? Or, could they have allergies at this young age?

**A** This is a controversial issue. Medical literature doesn't support the belief that teething causes a runny nose, fever or any other number of symptoms. Some pediatricians and most parents will tell you that there is clearly an association. The typical age for the first teeth, lower incisors, to erupt is about 6 to 10 months, but it can take up to one year. The most common cause of a persistent runny nose in children this age is likely viral. It may appear that they have had the same runny nose for months, but it is probably just one little cold after another, especially if they are in day care. While runny nose is a common symptom of allergies in children and adults, it is very uncommon for infants under 1 year of age to acquire an environmental allergy. Allergies in this age group are most commonly caused by foods alone and symptoms generally do not include runny or stuffy nose.

**Q** I did not vaccinate my boy/girl twins who are now 3 years old because I did not think it was safe. I have heard that whooping cough is



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coming back. My kids seem to be prone to colds, coughs and have even been wheezy. What is whooping cough? Is it related to croup? Why would children have one cold after another?



Whooping cough is an upper respiratory infection caused by the bacteria *bordetella pertussis*. It usually starts with symptoms of a common cold—stuffy, runny nose and a low-grade fever. It is at this point that the disease is the most contagious. But the true whooping cough occurs several days later. A whooping cough consists of several bursts of severe coughing that leaves the child so out of breath he is forced to take a deep, deep breath and that makes the whooping sound. This cough can last from a few days to upwards of 3 months. Your grandmother might have called it the 100-day cough. It is dangerous because the severe cough, caused by irritation of the lining of the airway, causes some of the tissue lining the airway to actually slough off. In some children this can cause an acute blockage and they stop breathing. While this does not occur in most cases, it is possible and that is why we strongly recommend vaccination.

Yes, whooping cough is making a comeback. From the 1940s until the 1970s, we saw a profound reduction in the disease. Over the past 10 years, especially the last two years, we have observed a steady increase. It can attack any age, but young infants and elderly are at high risk for the potentially life-threatening respiratory complications.

Croup is unrelated to whooping cough. It is caused by any one of several different viruses. It gets its name from the very loud, seal-like coughing noise. We treat the symptoms and occasionally give steroids to very sick patients. Croup also can be life threatening but much less so than whooping cough. The best prevention for these illnesses, and the common cold, is good hand-washing.

We don't have a vaccine for the viral croup, but we do have a safe vaccine for *pertussis*. In the 1980s some kids who got the pertussis vaccine did have seizures, but today's formulation is new and completely different. There are catch-up schedules for all vaccines from your primary care doctor. ♡

---

Greg Montgomery, M.D., is a pediatric pulmonologist on the faculty of Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. He is the father of 4-year-old twins Maggie and Charlie, who were on our July/August 2002 cover.

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## Love objects and grandmas

My mother and my mother-in-law have some common traits, but they are quite different people. One grew up in Virginia, earned a Ph.D. in epidemiology, married a European psychoanalyst, worked as a scientist for about 35 years and raised three children. The other grew up in New England, earned a B.A. in literature, married an internist and raised four children. Both are independent, sensitive, intelligent, talented women, who probably would run into oncoming traffic to rescue any of their beloved grandchildren.

They adore our kids with such intensity that other mothers, grandmothers and even strangers notice and tell me how lucky I am. But they don't have to. My husband and I wouldn't have chosen such proximity to our parents if we didn't appreciate their unabashed love for Adrienne and Julian.

Both grandmothers care for the children frequently, and both have their own ideas about the kids' dietary needs, speech-and-language development and sleep schedule. When you rely heavily on grandparental assistance, you have to expect grandparental advice, and it's usually welcome. Both women try to be discreet, so I sometimes see them bite their tongues when they want to share some valuable gem of information about nap-time rituals or feeding schedules, but don't want to interfere.

During the first year, one of the areas in which their philosophies differed dramatically had to do with teddy bears and other love objects. For the first nine months, the kids didn't seem dependent on any stuffed animals or tattered blankets. Julian got over his binkie obsession when he was about 6 months old, and no stuffed animals, dolls or toys earned any kind of special status



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY PETERSON

until Alex came home from a business trip with two cuddly teddy bears.

Adrienne fell in love with her red bear immediately, and she requested his presence at breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack time, changing time and bedtime. Her loyalty was infectious, and Julian, too, began to ask for his bear constantly. Before going on an outing or departing for an overnight stay, our mantra became, "Do we have the bears?"

My mother, whom the children call "Baboo," encouraged their fixation. She ran around our house to retrieve missing bears, asked the kids what their bear liked to eat, and bought bibs with bear images on them. My mother-in-law, who goes by "Grandma," tried to downplay their importance. "Bears don't go to restaurants," she'd say, hoping their enthusiasm would wane.

For months this went on, until two life-like baby dolls, gifts from Baboo, became the children's new, cherished love objects. Again, Baboo enjoyed their passion, and Grandma seemed less enthusiastic. Alex and I began to hate all stuffed animals and dolls, but we couldn't stand the screaming that occurred when one was lost, so we crawled around household floors and hotel rooms until we found them.

At one point, it seemed like everyone who

came into our home weighed in on the love-object dilemma. Our baby-sitter came from India where, according to her, boys don't play with dolls, so she asked why we allowed Julian to have a doll. I told her that by playing with his doll he got a chance to practice the same caring, nurturing skills that Adrienne was learning, and maybe someday he would use them when he became a daddy. The sitter didn't respond.

For a while I feared the consequences of the grandmothers' divergent approaches. I assumed that, given these two extremes to choose from, either the twins would need to haul all of their love objects to college in 17 years, or they'd swear off attachment to love objects, animate and inanimate, and choose solitary, spartan lives free from dependency on anything or anyone. I noticed how the grandmothers' approach to love objects reflected some of their perspectives on other aspects of discipline and limit setting.

These days, now that I have a bit more confidence, instead of worrying about whether the kids will be too influenced by one grandmother or the other, I've tried to establish my own positions on these matters, which are somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. I've also continued to cherish how much enrichment and tenderness my kids get from both equally strong, involved grandmothers—so much more in their first few years than some grandchildren experience in an entire lifetime. ♡

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Lauren Kafka reflects on the first year with her now 7-year-old boy/girl twins from her home in Bethsheda, Md., where she runs a home-based editorial business.

## Increasing your milk supply

**Q** I heard that taking the herbal supplement fenugreek helps with milk production. Is this true? I used to have plenty of milk but since going back to work part-time, my supply is not as adequate. I want to continue to breastfeed through the first year but am afraid my milk will not keep up. How can I keep my flow high enough for two, while using bottles to supplement now and then? Also, I can't find the number of calories burned when breastfeeding two babies. Is it double what is required when breastfeeding one?

Joan  
Columbus, Ohio

**A** The need for a reliable milk supply can be a difficult issue to handle when you're trying to provide for more than one. Unlike women with one baby, who can store milk for their little one from one breast while feeding her with the other, mothers of twins need every drop they can make just to keep up—let alone have much to store in the freezer for a day when we miss a pumping or feeding time. The most important thing to remember when going back to work is that your pumping/nursing schedule must remain firmly in place just like it did when you were home, or your supply will be inadequate no matter what else you do. The breasts' milk supply is driven by the demands of the babies, and if the breasts are emptied less often or less completely, the supply will decline. With the help of a supportive employer and with commitment, effort and a strict schedule on your part it is possible to breastfeed twins or more with minimal supplementation.

Fenugreek has been recommended for centuries for a variety of problems. Some doctors do recommend fenugreek to increase milk supply, but the question with any treatment, whether a prescription pharmaceutical or an over-the-counter herbal remedy is whether it works and whether it is safe. The evidence is limited: When populations of women taking the herb were tested against women taking a sugar pill, no significant difference was found except in a few women who had remarkable increases their milk supply for unknown reasons.

Like all medications, fenugreek has potential risks. In the

women who showed a benefit, they needed such high quantities of the herb that their urine and their babies' urine smelled like maple syrup. This can confuse doctors looking for a potentially serious illness of newborn babies called "maple syrup urine disease." Also, unlike prescription drugs, whose purity has to be tested and approved, herbal medications are not regulated. Fenugreek sometimes contains coumadin (a blood thinner) and nicotinic acid (a medicine that lowers blood pressure and cholesterol), and these chemicals can pass through breast milk into the baby's system, potentially causing problems. Another disadvantage of herbal remedies is that because they are unregulated, there is no guarantee that you are getting what you've purchased. One study found that up to 45% of the bottles on store shelves contained none of the active product they claimed to contain, and up to 50% were contaminated with other chemical compounds.

So, buyer beware: If you choose to take an herbal remedy, go to a reputable herbalist rather than the grocery store and be sure you understand all potential risks of the compound. Treat it as you would any other medication. Just because something is "natural" does not mean it is safe. Aspirin is just the purified bark of the willow tree and the powerful heart medicine digoxin is simply a foxglove plant; eat too much of either plant and you can die. Be sure you have cleared any medicine you take with your physician, since even herbs can interact with other drugs you take.

And, yes, you need to double the calories burned when breastfeeding two babies. In the first six months you will burn up to 1800 extra calories per day just to keep the supply high enough to be able to breastfeed exclusively.

If you are able to, keep breastfeeding. If your supply diminishes and you find yourself no longer able to breastfeed as much as possible, please don't beat yourself up over it. We all must make choices and your babies will be OK regardless of how you balance their feedings with keeping a roof over their heads.

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



## Alligators, baboons and exadinner

Although every new parent endures a long trial teaching a child how to speak, the journey for parents of twins is a special odyssey.

Alexa was the first to (attempt to) talk. But even her “Da-da,” while easy to decipher, was repeated in a gravelly monk-like chant for 30 minutes straight. This alarmed visitors, who thought she just might be possessed. Fortunately her vocabulary expanded to include our horses’ names (changed to “Dok,” “Darm” and “Deef,” during her “D” phase) and woo-woo, her special word for trains.

Emmalyn watched intently as her sister chattered on, but did not utter a word for months. We were worried. We should have been grateful.

Once both girls were in full cry, we identified with the parents in that fast-food commercial who are so batty from their daughter’s incessant talking that they buy her a shake at the drive-thru, just to buy some peace and quiet in the car. We used to think those parents were callous. Now we thought they were just well-intentioned people who wanted to preserve their sanity and provide their daughter with calcium, too.

Our “conversations” with Emmalyn and Alexa were fraught with peril. It was critical, I thought, to acknowledge their attempts at self-expression and try to understand them. But that wasn’t easy.

There was, for example, the time that I was pushing the two of them in a grocery cart through the supermarket, and Emmalyn let out a bellow of, “Baboons!”

Dodging glares from people around us, I whispered, “Shhhhhh, honey, no baboons here. This is the grocery store.”

“Baboons!” Emmalyn shrieked, adding wild gestures to emphasize her point.



ILLUSTRATION BY TIFFANY LAURENCIO

“There are no...” I looked around just to be sure. “There are no baboons, sweetheart.”

The frustration in her mind was written on her face as it fell. Her voice dropped to a tearful whisper. “Baboons.”

A moment later, as we ventured toward the check-out lane, she gave it one last desperate attempt. Reaching skyward with one hand and grabbing the few remaining hairs of my forearm with the other, she shrieked again, “Baboons!”

It was then that I looked up and saw... balloons. “Oh, balloons!” I said, “You saw balloons!”

She grinned a near-toothless grin and nodded. “Baboons.” And baboons they remained for many months afterward, to the shock and heart palpitations of anyone standing near us.

Wild animals were a consistent theme with Emmalyn. Soon afterward she started chanting, “Alligator, alligator,” as we moved through a department store.

“Alligator?”

She nodded. “Alligator! Go alligator!”

Perhaps there was an alligator embroidered on a shirt, but I saw nothing. Finally

I asked, “Where’s the alligator, honey?”

She twisted in her stroller and gestured directly to the... escalator. Of course.

Alexa, however, was more abstract. She completely threw me once as I tucked her into her crib one warm summer night, and she whispered, “Exadinner?”

“Love you, too, sweetheart.”

She shook her head and pointed out the window. “Exadinner!”

I saw nothing. “I don’t know, honey.”

“Exadinner, Mom. Exadinner.” And, just like the American in a foreign country who thinks that repeating a phrase louder helps the listener understand it better, she shouted at the top of her little lungs, “Exadinner!”

I finally had to leave in defeat. Not sure who was more exasperated, I recounted it to Ken.

He shrugged and dismissed it with a simple, “Hard to say.”

The next morning, I went up to get the girls from their cribs. “Good morning, girls!” I said, “It’s such a nice warm day today, we’re going to have lots of fun. We can play outside!”

At the top of the stairs, Alexa writhed in my arms. “Exadinner!” she shrieked, tapping me on the side of the face. “Mom, exadinner!”

Warily, I turned to hunt for a clue to the mysterious word. And there, still in its box waiting to be installed upstairs, was an appliance just like the one they’d watched their father put in a window downstairs the day before. They had marveled at the cool breeze that magically came out of it, abating the hot, humid summer days that our area is so notorious for.

The air conditioner. ♡

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Kandace York is a freelance writer who lives in Luckey, Ohio, with her husband and twins.

## Backtalk in stereo

**Q** My 4-year-old boy/girl twins have smart mouths. When I ask them to clean their room they shout, "You can't make me!" The more one says, the more the other chimes in. It's as if they try to outdo each other.

**A** When backtalk spews from your preschoolers' mouths, you become painfully aware of their ability to mimic words (good and bad) and control their world with them. Backtalk can only be learned by exposure to it, so limit the opportunities your child has to hear unpleasant words.

### Preventing the problem

- Talk to your children as you want to be talked to. Teach them how to use language you want to hear. Say, "thank you," "please" and "I'm sorry." Also teach them that it is not always what they say but how they say it that is considered backtalk.
- Decide what constitutes backtalk. Sarcasm, name-calling, shouting answers and defiant refusals are backtalk; simple refusals like "I don't want to" are whining; and questions like "Do I have to?" are expressions of opinion.
- Monitor friends, media and personal speech. Keep tabs on what words slip through your lips and those of friends, peers, family and TV characters.

### Solving the problem: what to do

- Wear out the words. Tell the one backtalking to practice saying the offending statement for one minute for each year of age to make the phrase lose its power. Say, "I'm sorry you said that. I'll set the timer. You must say that until the timer

rings. When it rings you can stop saying it."

- Ignore the backtalk. Try to pay as little attention as possible to inoffensive backtalk. Pretending the event didn't even occur takes away any possible power the backtalker has over you.
- Compliment nice talk. Let your children know what kind of talk you prefer them to use by pointing out when backtalk is not occurring. Say, "I like it when you don't shout back at me when I ask you a question. That was so nice of you." Tell them it's often how they say something that makes speech backtalk. Say, "I don't care" in an angry voice; then say it in a pleasant voice to illustrate your point.

### Solving the problem: what not to do

- Don't play "gotcha." Since backtalk is how your children try to get power over you, don't use backtalk yourself. They may find ways to entertain themselves by seeing how they can make you mad or get your attention by using backtalk, which you don't want to encourage.
- Don't teach backtalk. Shouting answers back to your children will only show them how to use backtalk. Although it's hard not to yell when you're being yelled at, try to teach your child how to be respectful by being respectful to him.
- Don't use severe punishment for backtalk. Save your strongest punishment for really important, harmful behaviors that are dangerous. Only fear is taught through punishment—not respect. ♥

Barbara Unell is the founder of TWINS Magazine and co-author of *Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking: Practical Solutions to the Most Common Preschool Behavior Problems*. To read more of her discipline solutions, order her book online at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) or by calling (888) 55-TWINS.

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## Triplet mom gets helping hands

How many hands does a mother of triplets need?

With 17-month-old triplet daughters, Cove, Texas, resident Stacy Darlington could use extra hands folding those 30 pairs of pajamas, keeping the pacifier bucket stocked and changing a dozen-plus diapers per day.

But on March 9, an accident left the 36-year-old mother with two broken wrists, dual casts and doctor's orders to lift nothing heavier than a telephone.

Tell that to a crying toddler—or three—who just finished their naps.

The weeks immediately after the accident were spent redefining mom's role in the Darlington home, and teaching the family—Stacy, her husband Bubba, and triplets Mackinzie, Darby and Kendall—that even misfortune can serve up rich rewards.

The accident that temporarily claimed Darlington's hands occurred one afternoon when she heard children screaming in her neighborhood. She was practicing her mosaic-making hobby with a neighbor while two teens watched the triplets, but when the former paramedic heard the commotion she ran outdoors.

"I saw two kids on top of a stray golden retriever, trying to take their pet dachshund out of his jaws," Darlington said. "I was afraid for the kids getting attacked so I ran toward them, but tripped."

Darlington landed on her wrists and face, on the pavement. She knew immediately by the disfiguration that her left wrist was broken.

She hobbled to her house and yelled for the teens, unable to open the door. "Samantha, call your mom to come help me," Darlington yelled through the window. "I think I need to go to the emergency room."

Samantha's mother, Becky Whitcomb, works as a physical therapist for the triplets. She drove Darlington to San Jacinto Methodist Hospital, then called family members and stayed until x-ray results were read.

Darlington's first reaction was panic.

"I was scared to death about how I would be able to take care of my daughters with two broken wrists," she said. "But I got calm about that and then thought, 'I can't even take care of myself, much less my daughters. Who's going to take care of me?'"

Whitcomb had similar thoughts. Her job with Bay Area Rehabilitation Center includes coordinating services for her patients, so she began looking for someone who could help Darlington long term.

A hospital social worker told her the most that the insurance company could do is provide someone for an hour every two weeks. Typically though, the social worker said, churches provide that type of help.

But the Darlingtons were newcomers in town, and with the demands of raising the toddlers and keeping them healthy, they had not yet settled into a local church. So Whitcomb turned to her own congregation.

### Churches help

Whitcomb called her pastor, Scott Neal, of Eagle Heights Fellowship in Mont Belvieu, who spread word of the family's need to church members through an e-mail prayer chain.

Meanwhile, other neighbors of the Darlingtons contacted their pastor, Jake Porter, of First Baptist Church of Mont Belvieu. The church's deacon, Wayne Hickman, began organizing volunteers.

"After word got out, we got volunteers by the droves," Hickman said. "She's got those girls on a schedule that's just amazing. I've never seen anything like it. We have really enjoyed helping. We just want to do more so others can see Christ in us."

Today as many as 25 volunteers from both churches, in addition to family members and neighbors, have come to the family's home between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. to help with housework and childcare. Dozens more have sent meals, sometimes two complete meals per night.

"It's been so nice not having to worry," she said. "It's all been such a blessing with these two churches. We're not members of either one; we've never even visited them, but it's been such amazing outreach to me, it just reaffirms my faith in God."

### Triplets adjust

Darlington's physical restrictions for six weeks included activities most mothers never think twice about: lifting her children from their cribs, diapering, bathing, putting the girls into high chairs and even buckling the chair's safety strap.

But in the midst of the challenges, Mackinzie, Darby and Kendall have amazed their parents. Previously shy Darby now smiles at those who visit, and the three play readily with their new friends as they scoot about on matching pink cars.

"They're actually having fun with this," Darlington said. "It's like God planted a love bug seed in them for everybody."

The strict schedule Darlington crafted in the triplets'



Stacy Darlington and her husband Bubba hold triplets (l. to r.) Mackenzie, Darby and Kendall.

early months “for sanity’s sake” has been kept throughout this upheaval.

“The girls are really good,” said Samantha, 16. “They’re so routine that they’re easy to take care of.”

The thing that Darlington misses the most, amazingly, is diapering her daughters. “I guess it’s a control thing,” she laughed. “But I do miss it. Only an injured mother could relate to that!”

Darlington has found ways to use her elbows to embrace her girls, or to re-direct their energetic play, but she misses the physical contact with them.

### Appreciating life

Waiting to embrace her children is not a new longing for Darlington, though. She and Bubba spent thousands of dollars on fertility medication for five years and had their adoption hopes crushed before they were able to hold their own three babies.

“When you want something so badly, you cherish it so much more,” she said. “You tend to have such a deep appreciation for life when it doesn’t come easily.”

The couple continues to appreciate what life has dealt them as Darlington heals.

“My husband appreciates me more,” Darlington said, grinning at Bubba. “He realizes now how much I do around the house.”

“The local families have shown us that it’s not just about ‘Look out for me and my family,’ or just about ‘our church’ and ‘our congregation,’ but there’s other families out there, and it’s about looking out for the community.”

“If my daughters can help bring that brighter spot in our community through my tragedy, then it was worth it. They are gifts from God and I have to share them.” ♡

Carla Rabalais is a mom of six singletons and a freelance writer who lives in Baytown, Texas.

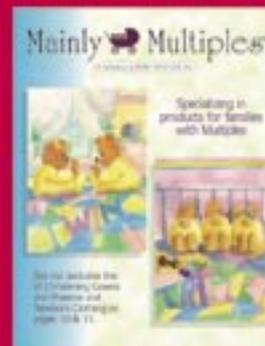
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# BULLY, bully no more: Keep your twins safe



by Joann Amoroso

**H**ow can I tell if my child is being bullied? What if my child is the bully? Isn't it just kids being kids? These questions and more are on the minds of many parents as their children enter preschool, kindergarten or school. Bullying also is a major concern to educators across the country.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* recently reported that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying, either as the victim or the bully. About 160,000 children miss one or more school days each month because they are too afraid to attend.

The consequences for both the victim and the bully can be significant and have a lifelong impact. Studies show that the victims of bullying are more likely to grow up depressed and anxious. Bullies are much

more likely than non-bullies to become adult criminals.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others perpetrated by individuals or groups, according to the Center for School Mental Health Assistance. It can include behaviors ranging from the overt and direct—verbal taunts, name calling, physical abuse, extortion/stealing—to more subtle, indirect forms of aggression—threats, exclusion, intimidation. It is behavior that is meant to hurt another person, carried out by someone who has more power against someone who has less power.

The National Mental Health Association put it in basic terms: Bullying is aggressive behavior. It is an intentional attempt to

cause discomfort or injury and is a form of violence that should not be tolerated. Bullying should never be accepted as normal behavior and if not stopped, can progress to more serious antisocial behavior.

Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: the Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* (Harcourt, 2002) notes the distinctions between the genders' bullying tactics. Girls tend to use subtle, indirect methods such as snatching a toy or saying "Give me that toy or I won't be your friend anymore." Older girls can bully without saying a word: the silent treatment, rolling their eyes in class or isolating a victim.

Young boys tend to be more physical than their female counterparts, but they tend to not hold grudges. Older boys practice both physical and psychological bullying and intimidation.

## Bullying can be seen in play groups and in preschool.

### When and where does bullying start?

Bullying is prevalent throughout the world and cuts across age groups, socio-economic, racial/ethnic and cultural lines.

Richard Tremblay, a professor of pediatrics, psychiatry and psychology at the University of Montreal, studies adult offenders, juvenile delinquents, kindergartners and even toddlers. Dr. Tremblay believes that aggression is an inborn trait that peaks around 17 months of age. From then on, adults in children's lives serve as role models for appropriate behavior, teaching them how to control their impulses. "It is during the preschool years, especially, that people slowly gain more control over their impulses, as their neurological systems mature and they learn strategies to curb those impulses," stated Dr. Tremblay.

Bullying can be seen in play groups and in preschool. It intensifies during transitional stages—such as first grade or starting middle school—and declines toward the end of high school. It occurs in the home, on the playground and in school. The Girls and Boys Town-sponsored organization, Parenting, also supports the idea that antisocial behavior begins early in life and without intervention can easily snowball into a much bigger problem.

### Why do kids bully?

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. Children learn bullying behavior from older children, from adults and from television, according to Sharon Lynn Kagan, a professor of early childhood and family policy at Columbia University. If children experience put-downs or physical punishment at home or in school, and if they see

this abuse go unchallenged, they believe this behavior is acceptable. Bullies like to feel power and in control. They can be insensitive to the feelings of others and defiant towards adults.

Bullies often pick on others as a way of dealing with their own problems. They may be trying to gain acceptance themselves or to feel more important, popular or in control. Some of them know firsthand how hurtful their actions can be because they have been bullied or are victims of abuse themselves. Some bullies think their behavior is normal because they come from families where everyone regularly gets angry, shouts or calls each other names. They copy what they see and hear. Like the children they terrorize, bullies often have low self-esteem.

A recent study conducted in Sweden and Great Britain examined antisocial behavior in a group of 1,500 pairs of twins. A third of the Swedish pairs and half of the British pairs were identical and the remaining were fraternal. The study concluded that the type of aggressive antisocial

## How can your children deal with bullies?

- Model leadership skills. Be an example of how to get along with others.
- Use swift and meaningful consequences. Remove any doubt that you mean "No" when you say "No" to bullying behavior. Use consequences that are immediate, reasonable, important to your children and show a relationship to the behavior.
- Stop the problem when it is small. Some adults think children should work out their own problems, but young children may not be able to do this without resorting to aggressive behavior. Specific training helps children come up with alternatives.
- Teach your children early on to steer clear of others who behave like bullies.
- Encourage regular play visits at your home. Give your children a large group of positive peers to spend time with and to turn to when needed.
- Encourage your twins to use the buddy system to protect themselves.
- If your child is facing a bully, tell him or her to use humor or give the bully a compliment to throw the bully off guard. (Remind your children how important it is avoid using humor to make fun of the bully.)
- Develop friendships by having your children join clubs, sports programs or social organizations.
- If one of your twins is a victim, let school authorities know immediately.
- Keep your own written records of the names, dates, times and circumstances of the incidents. Submit a copy of your log to the school principal.
- Teach your children to never defend themselves with a gun or other weapon.

—compiled from suggestions from the National PTA, Girls and Boys Town Parenting and The Nemours Foundation



Anything can become the basis for bullying, including traits that set one child apart from another, such as being a twin.

cial behavior seen in bullies is more likely to be inherited than are nonaggressive antisocial behaviors such as delinquency, truancy and theft. The identical twins were more likely than fraternal twins to share a tendency toward the aggressive behavior.

The findings for nonaggressive behavior differed for boys and girls. For boys, identical twins were just as likely as fraternal twins to share symptoms of nonaggressive antisocial behavior, which indicated they learned it rather than inherited it. In contrast, girls' behavior appears to stem more from their genes. Given the implications of this study, further investigation certainly seems warranted.

### **Who are the likely victims?**

Those who are different in race, body size, clothing and those with disabilities are often targets. Anything can become the basis for bullying, including traits that set one child apart from another, such as being a twin. Girls and boys alike are targets and children who are anxious, insecure or suffering from low self-esteem are particularly vulnerable.

### **How can you tell if your child is a victim?**

If you are concerned that your child is being bullied, look for these signs of stress:

- Increased passivity or withdrawal, anxiety, depression, fearfulness, irritability
- Frequent crying
- Recurrent complaints of physical symptoms such as stomachaches or headaches with no apparent cause

- Unexplained bruises
- Sudden drop in grades or other learning problems
- Suddenly not wanting to go to school
- Missing belongings or money
- Bedwetting
- Significant changes in social life
- Sudden changes in the way your child talks about himself.

### **What can you do to prevent your child from becoming a victim? What if your child is a victim?**

The National Mental Health Association recommends that we all take steps to stop bullying and to start early. As parents, we need to talk with our children before they start school and continue talking about this topic throughout the school years. Even small acts of teasing should be stopped in their tracks. Don't fail to correct this kind of behavior because of a child's young age. This is exactly when to stop it! Adults who remain silent when children are bullying others give permission to the behavior and thereby encourage it.

Too often, victims are told to "toughen up" or "ignore it." This only isolates them, implies that the bullying may be their fault and sends the message that they are not being taken seriously. Realistically, victims have probably tried both of these strategies before asking for help. If these strategies worked, they would have solved the problem already.

Teach your children how to be assertive, rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully. Bullies are less likely to

intimidate children who are confident and resourceful. Encourage your children to express their feelings clearly, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, stand up for themselves without fighting and walk away from a dangerous situation. Tell them to speak out against the bully and inform a teacher if the behavior is persistent or is dangerous.

It is not easy to teach young children to do these things, for a variety of reasons. Young children use facial expressions as cues and may not be as sensitive to less tangible signs of conflict. Younger children may not be capable of finding multiple, nonaggressive solutions to a conflict. Younger children may not understand how their actions affect others. This understanding comes with maturation.

One effective way to teach conflict resolution skills to young children is dramatic role-playing, according to Nancy Carlsson-Paige of Lesley University and Diane E. Levin of Wheelock College who created a curriculum guide on the topic for Facts in Action, a project of the Associated Early Care and Education. Encourage children to act out characters, switch roles and play "taking turn" games. Focus on how conflicts can escalate and learning specific skills.

Finally, make sure that play dates and after-school activities are supervised. Most bullying happens when adults are not around.

### **What if your child is the bully?**

A juvenile court in Germany recently sentenced 17-year-old twins to serve two years and nine months for bullying younger

children. The twins would dress identically in order to trick younger children into thinking they could be in two places at one time. Pretending to use magic, they would intimidate the younger children into handing over money, sweets and other items. One twin would confront a child and force them to run down a street where, upon rounding a corner, they would come face to face with the other twin. They operated in parks and playgrounds in Nuremberg until their arrest.

The above case is an extreme example of twins using their similarities to bully other children. If you find out that one or both of your twins are bullies, remain calm and avoid becoming defensive. Although not all bullying stems from family problems, it is a good idea to examine the behavior and interactions in your home. What seems like innocent teasing at home may be the model for aggressive behavior in your children. Constant teasing or ridicule affects a child's self-esteem. Children can end up blaming others for their own shortcomings. Home should be a safe place for children. It is important to address the problems and to change your child's abusive behavior.

Here are some other suggestions from the Nemours Foundation:

- Ask some hard-hitting questions to help your children identify what might be bothering them. Ask if they are being bullied, why they think they are bullying, what they think about being called a bully, what might help them stop.
- You may also want to schedule an appointment with the school counselor or a mental health professional.

## RESOURCES

*Before Push Comes to Shove: Building Conflict Resolution with Children* by Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levin, 1998.

*The Berenstain Bears and the Bully* by Stan and Jan Berenstain

*Trouble in the Barkers' Class* (Barker Twins) by Tomie Depaolo.

[www.wcwonline.org/empathy/index.html](http://www.wcwonline.org/empathy/index.html) • Wellesley Centers for Women: Research, Education and Action. Developing empathy in toddlers as a building block for social behavior.

<http://nieer.org/> • National Institute For Early Education Research, (732) 932-4350

[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org) • National Mental Health Association, (703) 684-7722

[www.factsinaction.org](http://www.factsinaction.org) • Associated Early Care and Education, (617) 695-0700

[www.parenting.org](http://www.parenting.org) • Girls and Boys Town

[www.scholastic.com/familymatters/raising-kids/bullying.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/raising-kids/bullying.htm) • The Scholastic Store

[www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org) • NW Regional Educational Laboratory. Help for parents and schools in choosing a bullying prevention program as well as the results of several programs

[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) • National PTA

- Emphasize that bullying is a serious problem and will not be tolerated. Set firm and reasonable consequences should the bullying continue.
- Teach your child to treat others with respect and kindness. Model this behavior yourself.
- Find out if your children's friends are also bullying. Seek group interventions through counselors.
- Set limits: Stop any aggression immediately and help your children find non-violent alternatives.
- Observe your children's interactions and praise appropriate behavior.
- Enlist the help of school staff to influence a change in your children's behavior.

## Hope for the future

High quality preschool programs hold one of the keys to curbing the aggression that leads to bullying. Tremblay has stated: "A high quality preschool environment can teach children ways to channel aggressive

impulses in constructive ways, such as how to use words, negotiate and get along with all those other pint-sized aggressors."

Solutions to the bullying problem need to be multi-faceted. The federal government is planning to fund a \$3.4 million campaign aimed at 70 education, law enforcement, civic and religious groups. Talk with your preschool, kindergarten and school administrators to make sure they have a well-thought-out and fully implemented plan to combat bullying.

Most importantly, listen to your children. We never question that we need to help our children learn to walk, talk and read. We also need to help them develop and nurture essential conflict-resolution skills. It is a gift that will serve our children their whole lives. ♥

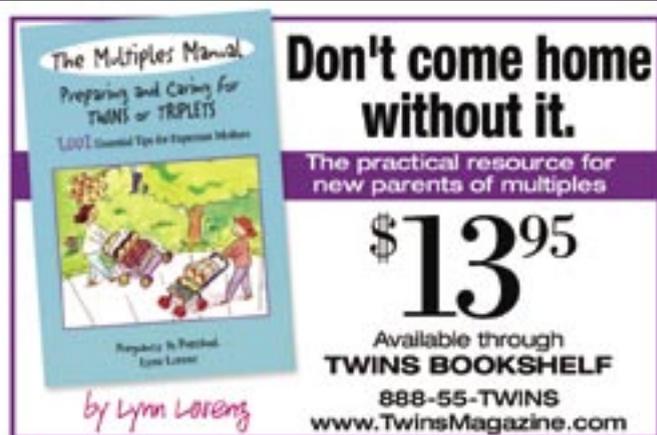
Joann Amoroso, a freelance writer who lives in Englewood, Colo., is the mother of 7-year-old triplets.



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*by Lynn Loreng*

# TOGETHER OR APART?

With homeschooling, it's your choice

BY LISA TIFFIN



“ Experience is a good guideline, and we’ve had our best results in separating twins because they grow individually and gain more socialization skills apart,” explained our local principal, Mark Turner, in a phone conversation we had last year to discuss kindergarten options for our twins Andy and Matt.

When it comes time for school, many parents of multiples are as dismayed as I was to learn that it is often the school’s choice whether to separate their twins, and more often than not, the school does place twins in separate classrooms. But for parents who feel strongly about the issue, there is a way to guarantee parental choice: homeschooling. “Parents know their kids the best,” Turner allowed, acknowledging that homeschooling was a viable option, especially for parents like us who feel strongly about keeping their twins together in school.

Linda Koenig, co-president of the board of Greater Rochester

Loving Education at Home (LEAH), explained, “Homeschooling is legal in every state in the union, and it is becoming more and more accepted.” In fact, many people choose to homeschool their children for philosophical, educational or lifestyle reasons—in addition to religious conviction.

## Can I really do it?

Many parents worry about how difficult homeschooling is, or if they can actually corral their twins long enough to teach them how to read or add and subtract. Koenig allays parents’ fears: “You don’t need a degree; you just need a desire to teach your children.”

With the increase in the popularity of homeschooling, there are support groups, Web sites and curricula for every level of homeschooler out there. “There are many helps to parents who wish to homeschool, with everything done for you to your doing

everything from scratch. There is no reason for anybody not to homeschool if they want to,” Koenig added.

## Obstacles can be overcome

As the practice of homeschooling has spread throughout the country, many of the early obstacles associated with home-based education have been overcome.

Perhaps the top issue that people associate with homeschooling is socialization—or lack thereof. Many people wonder how children who spend all their time with their family can possibly become well-adjusted, confident individuals.

Twins add their own spin to the socialization issue. Colleen and Craig Burritt of Hilton, N.Y., homeschool their four children, including 18-year-old twins Cayce and Emily, who will graduate this year. “Socialization was never a problem for the kids,” said Colleen. She jokingly explains that her standard response to people who ask about socialization is: “Mom doesn’t get enough!” She points out that her children can talk to a 2-year-old or a 92-year-old equally well.

Many homeschooling parents beat the socialization problem by joining a support group where they and their children can mix with others who are homeschooling, or where the children might be able to take a lesson from another homeschooling parent. They play together and celebrate holidays, and enjoy any number of group activities.

Koenig said that groups such as LEAH typically offer sports teams, field trips and group lessons. “Most homeschooled children tend to have a much broader socialization than other kids because they mix with kids younger and older than themselves, as well as with adults,” she explained.

Competition is a tougher obstacle for homeschooling families with multiples, perhaps because the solutions must be determined for each set of multiples, as situations arise. Obviously, with such close quarters and only a few students in the “classroom,” it is natural for twins to see each other as their main competitors. The emotions of the sibling relationship can simmer and parents find ways to prevent competition from erupting into an unhealthy rivalry, often through trial-and-error.

Betsy and Dan Mager, Greece, N.Y., are homeschooling six children, including 10-year-old twins Jonathan and Victoria. Betsy notes that while her twins tend not to be overly competitive with each other, she tries not to let them know each other’s scores on tests and papers. Instead, she will tell each child individually, and then allow each to decide if he or she wants to share those scores.

## Benefits unique to multiples

The first and most obvious benefit of homeschooling multiples is the ability of the parent to choose whether the twins or triplets would do better together or separately. Patty and Larry Fuhrken homeschool three of their five children (the two oldest have already graduated), including 15-year-old twins Elisa and Sylvia.

Home School Families of Twins, a support organization based in Texas, conducts an annual survey of homeschooling parents. In 2000, 270 families received questionnaires; about 24% responded.

The average age of the mothers was 38.4 years.

10% of the moms had a master’s degree; 46%, bachelor’s degree (17%, teaching certificates); 37%, some college; 8%, high school.

70% of moms homeschooled because a friend did so.

37% of the homeschooling twin sets were first pregnancies.

24% of the moms taught only preschool age.

76% who homeschooled also had very young children; some even nursed twins in addition to homeschooling.

71% of the mothers planned to homeschool through grade 12.

96% of mothers planned to homeschool again the next year.

65% of moms considered teaching easier because they had two students the same age.

88% of families were one-income households.

100% were two-parent families.

11% of parents permitted one or both twins to attend public school at some time.

94% of the mothers were the primary teachers.

6% conducted homeschool within 7+ hours daily; 32%, 5 to 6 hours; 36%, 3 to 4 hours; and 26%, 1 to 2 hours.

79% purchased used curriculum.

78% of twins performed at different speeds in a subject, whether identical or fraternal.

63% voluntarily took nationally standardized testing.

80% of multiples studied together.

76% of multiples worked as a team.

74% of multiples played sports and took physical education together.

35% had weekly “co-op” classes with other homeschoolers.

—For more information on homeschooling twins, contact Margie Downey, founder of Home School Families of Twins. E-mail [Margie.hsft@juno.com](mailto:Margie.hsft@juno.com) or visit <http://home.flash.net/~hsft>

## Homeschooling Web sites

### A to Z Home's Cool

<http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com>

### All-In-One Homeschool Resource Center

[www.come-over.to/homeschool/](http://www.come-over.to/homeschool/)

### Home School Families of Twins

<http://home.flash.net/~hsft/>

### National Home Education Network

[www.NHEN.org](http://www.NHEN.org)

At home, before the family began traveling the country this year and homeschooling on the road, they found that separating the girls worked best for them. When Elisa and Sylvia reached school age, Patty noticed that the girls sat at the table and talked only to each other, ignoring any work placed before them. She wondered if the girls were simply not ready for school, but felt they should try splitting them up.

They changed their sleeping arrangements at home by placing Elisa and Sylvia in separate bedrooms with an older sister, but kept the twins together for schooling. Within two weeks the problem was solved. "It was like Elisa and Sylvia realized there was more to the family than just mom, dad and them," Patty said. "Once they realized this, they began to interact with school, and schooling went much easier."

For others, keeping the twins together has been beneficial. Betsy and Dan have always schooled Jonathan and Victoria together. "They are a team," Betsy said, "They will go to each other if they have a problem, and they will help each other." When the twins were younger, Betsy taught them in a classroom-type setting with their older sister, Hannah. Now, the Mager children work independently and go to each other or to Betsy when they need help.

Having children the same age is one advantage of homeschooling multiples. Whereas parents of singletons may homeschool children years apart in age with widely divergent needs, parents of multiples often can plan one level of lessons for more than one child, and still allow for their twins' unique learning styles and individual pace of learning.

Another benefit of homeschooling is that you can give each child individual attention. We learned a valuable lesson with our sons Andy and Matt when we took them for swimming lessons at age 3. It was comical watching Andy jump right into the water, certain he was born to swim, while Matt clung to our necks with what we affectionately dubbed, "the Guatemalan death grip." Yet, at the end of the swim class we received a report describing the boys' skills and shortcomings as exactly the same. For us, the swim experiment was a failure. The boys had very different experiences in the water and either the instructor had no idea who was who, or never paid any attention to their individual needs and skills. We just got a cookie-cutter report.

"Many children do not blossom in a cookie-cutter education," said Koenig. "With homeschooling, you are able to deal with your child at his maturation level and can customize his education."

We decided our best bet would be to wait until the boys are ready to learn to swim, which brings up another benefit of homeschooling—the ability to tailor your lessons to each child. Whether you choose to teach your children together or apart, you can teach at each one's pace and according to his or her interest level. "You have to be flexible," Colleen Burrirt said. "If my child is understanding, we move on. You have to tailor the education to your child, not your child to the books."

## The choice is yours

Homeschooling is a workable option for educating twins, and, in fact, offers many advantages. Parents talk about the extra attention and time they are able to spend with each multiple, a higher involvement of fathers and an easier time handling discipline. Because homeschooling offers parents the opportunity to develop their children's individual gifts and interests, the capacity to go at a pace tailored to each child and the choice of schooling together or apart, it can be a great choice for parents of multiples. ♥

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Lisa Tiffin has an education degree and is a freelance writer from upstate New York. Her articles have appeared in Homeschooling Today, Grit Magazine and others. She and her husband have just finished homeschooling kindergarten with their identical twins Andy and Matt who were born in May of 1999. She can be reached at [acbooks@rochester.rr.com](mailto:acbooks@rochester.rr.com).

- In 2002, more than 2 million children were being homeschooled in the U.S.
- Homeschooling is growing at a rate of 15% per year.

—U.S. Census Bureau

## The ABC's of getting started

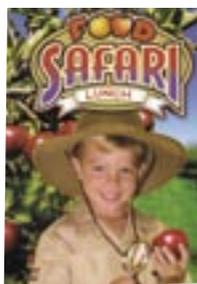
- Ask other homeschooling parents for suggestions.
- Become familiar with your children's learning styles.
- Create a classroom: desks, chairs, computer, lights, globe, easel, flip chart, maps, posters, dictionaries, reference materials, and special displays for nature, art or music study.
- Decide on the curriculum.
- Establish the rules.
- Find a homeschooling group.

## Family night

Set aside one night a week for Family Night. Spend at least one hour of the evening exercising. Teach your kids to jump rope (aerobic benefits and builds coordination) or play hopscotch for balance. If a blizzard hits or it's raining buckets, plug in a kid's exercise video such as Monkeydoos or Little Lila Yoga. Show them early that an active lifestyle is fun. And you might even feel like a kid again when you jump rope and play hopscotch.

## Toddler treat

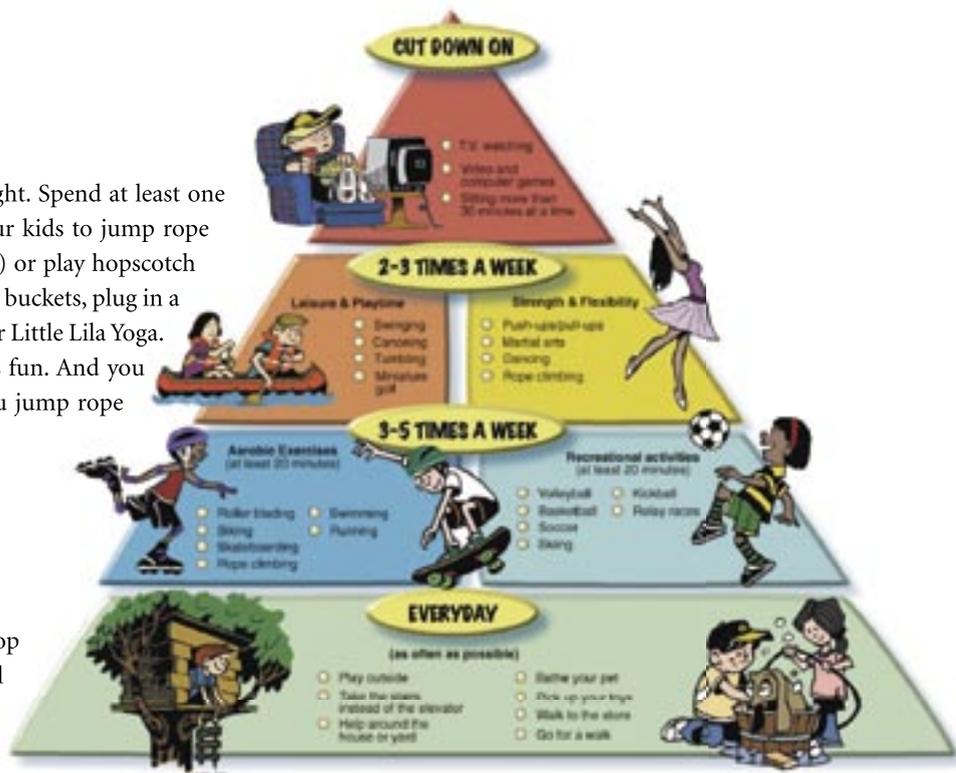
Use fresh vegetables. Bake a potato. Scoop out the flesh, mix with butter and milk until creamy and smooth. Stir in finely chopped steamed broccoli and cauliflower (or other favorite veggies). Add grated cheese, finely diced tomato. Scoop the mixture back into the potato skin, top with



## Food Safari

Chef Beary Good and Sprinkles, charming puppets lead young explorers 2 to 6 years old on a nutrition expedition through fields, trees and farms as they explain where our food comes from and what makes it so good for us. Tour guide Couscous peppers the tour with nutritional facts and keeps the safari on track

with humor, rhyme and singing. This may be the perfect carrot to dangle before a couple of picky eaters. From Yum Yum Studios, the award-winning producers of Baby Gourmet. About \$15. Visit [www.yumyumstudios.com](http://www.yumyumstudios.com) for more information.



Source: MU Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia

## Grain is good

Grains—foods such as bread, cereal, rice and pasta—provide the majority of the energy your child needs each day and are a source of folate, which helps build muscle.

Aim to make at least half of your child's grain intake from whole grains such as oatmeal, brown rice, and rye bread. Whole grains contain fiber that protects against heart disease and diabetes, and also help control your child's weight. Refined grains (white bread, white rice and most breakfast cereals), on the other hand, are the "bad carbs," the empty calories.

Don't be fooled. Only about 10% of crackers and breads with "wheat" in the name are whole wheat. Labels that claim "made with whole grain," "wheat" or "bran" should be red flags. Nabisco Reduced Fat Triscuits, Wheat Thins and Kashi's TLC crackers are primarily whole wheat. Look for "100% whole grain."

The USDA recommends that 2- to 3-year-olds eat 3 ounces of whole grains a day and 4- to 8-year-olds get in 4 to 5 ounces.

Sources of 1 ounce of grain:

- 1 slice of whole wheat bread
- ½ cup of cooked brown rice or pasta
- ½ cup of real oatmeal

Other good grains include wild rice and whole wheat pasta.

# “Are they twins?”

All the world loves twins, but sometimes its citizens have an odd way of expressing it. They probably don't realize how their words come across, but some strangers can ask the oddest questions imaginable. We offer three viewpoints and some gentle advice.

## Ask me about my twins... please!

by Jill Riddle

My wonderful husband, my 13-year-old son, my 2-year-old fraternal twin girls and I went to Michigan for my grandfather's 100th birthday party. We drove 11 hours, made about eight stops, stayed at four different hotels and ate at a different restaurant every night. We stopped at grocery stores and outlet malls, rest areas and fast food chains. And with all those stops, in all those states, in all those different locations...not once did anyone ask me about my twins!

When they were first born, I would try to run into the post office quickly, but people would drive me crazy. “Are they twins?” Yes. “Are they identical?” No. “Are you sure?” Yes. “Well, I don't know how you can tell them apart.” “You certainly have your hands full.”

I know they were trying to be friendly but all I could think was, “I didn't even brush my teeth this morning. Please leave me alone.”

Now that I am able to go grocery shopping without so much as a second glance, I find myself purposely dressing them in the same outfits and doing their hair the same. I am brushing my teeth before I go to the post office. Now, the looks we get are of pity because one (or both) is usually screaming about something. It just goes to show you—be careful what you wish for.

And to all the new multiple moms out there: Enjoy it while it lasts.

---

Jill Riddle is a freelance writer who lives in Chesterfield, Va., with her husband and three children.

## You've got your hands full

by Richard Baker

Whoever coined the expression, “If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all,” should give seminars teaching people how to talk to parents of twins.

My wife Beth and I are the proud parents of beautiful 1-year-old twin girls, Denali and Tabitha. Whenever Beth and I leave the house with the twins, we become instant celebrities, the center of attention everywhere we go. Like a celebrity who deals with paparazzi, however, we must deal with oblivious people who make rude and unfeeling comments about our babies.

Denali and Tabitha were a month old the first time Beth and I took them out for a walk. We were enjoying ourselves on a beautiful day, until a perfect stranger approached and advised us, “Twins. Hmmm. A lot of work.”

Did this person think that my wife and I didn't know this? Being polite people, Beth and I simply smiled and kept walking,

silently wishing we had told our advisor to leave us alone.

One day, when the girls were about 3 months old, Beth and I took them to the mall. Much to our delight, the girls were behaving so well that I told Beth she could go off on her own. I was proud as a peacock, pushing my double baby carriage and showing off my twin babies. When I went into the CVS drug store to buy bottled water, the lady behind the counter looked at my angelic children, shook her head and said, “I feel sorry for you.”

I was a 34-year-old, happily married father of two. Feel sorry for me? I weakly responded: “Don't feel sorry for me.” Looking back, I wish I had said something more intelligent and witty to reinforce how much I loved my children.

Taking the girls out to dinner at a restaurant has almost always been a pleasant experience. One time, however, the girls became irritable toward the end of the meal and we realized there was no chance of calming them down. As we were leaving, a middle-aged woman gently put her hand on my elbow. Expecting some kind of reassuring statement, I stopped. My jaw dropped when the lady looked at me and remarked, “Better you than me.”

How did this comment benefit my situation? All it did was tell me that the lady did not want twins.

Another mother recently asked Beth, “You're not going to have any more children, are you?” In other words, this woman assumed our lives were so harrowing that



Brandt and Brennan, 8½ months

## Some gentle replies

Despite the temptation to deliver a clever, but often sarcastic, reply, giving a stranger a kind reply can turn out to be more rewarding.

**“Are they twins?”**

“Yes, [smile] they are twins.” As you continue walking: “We are doubly blessed.”

**“My, you have your hands full.”**

“Yes, thankully, better full than empty.” [Smile!]

**“Did you take fertility drugs (or use IVF)?”**

“Why do you ask?” [Smile!]

**“Are they identical?”**

“They are individual twins.” [Smile!]

“Only from the waist up.” [Smile!]

“Yes, but very different.” [Smile!]

**“Double trouble!”**

“No, double blessings.” [Standard, but effective. Smile!]

**“Better you than me.”**

“Yes, we are very blessed.” [Again, standard, but effective. Smile!]

we would be foolish to consider having any more children.

Beth told her, “We would like to have another set of twins.” In response, this mother laughed sarcastically.

Beth and I are not immune to comments that serve as nothing more than back-handed compliments. We went to visit a friend who had been having trouble with her newborn son. When we arrived with Denali and Tabitha, our friend’s mother—whom we had never met—told her daughter, “And you think you have it bad. They have twins.”

“I see you’ve got your hands full,” is another dim-witted observation people like to make. If they mean it literally, then I suppose they are correct. Preparing to take the twins anywhere resembles packing to scale Mount Everest. There are bottles, diapers, baby wipes, Cheerios, extra clothing, not to mention the two car seats used to carry the babies to and from the car. Our hands are quite full.

Once again, I feel like making a sarcastic comment like, “Really? I haven’t noticed.” But normally I respond with, “You’d better believe it,” or, “We sure do.”

Most people who talk to us about Denali and Tabitha are quite pleasant and complimentary. Beth and I smile from ear to ear when a person tells us, “Your babies are beautiful,” or “You really are blessed.”

Please remember, if you want to say anything to parents about their twin children, be nice.

---

Richard Baker lives in Norwalk, Conn., with his wife and twins.

## Mission accomplished

by Nancy B. Gibbs

Immediately following the birth of their children, parents of multiples love the attention that their offspring draw. But after taking a few outings, parents of twins sometimes become weary from the constant interruptions and numerous questions asked by strangers.

A few months ago while I was shopping I spied a familiar scene. An elderly lady stopped a mother of twins. “Are they twins?” she asked. The tired mom was somewhat rude, giving her a quick answer. Then with a snide expression, the mother turned and walked away.

“It’s OK,” I said to the elderly lady. “I’m a mother of twins and it is hard to keep a

smile on your face when you haven’t slept in a month.”

I discovered early on that answering dozens of questions during each shopping trip is a part of the blessing of being a parent of twins. Here are some ways I dealt with the interruptions.

1. I allowed ample time to get my shopping done.
2. I grinned and accepted the curiosity of others. A smile always made me feel better.
3. I realized that twins are unique and they would draw extra attention.
4. I tried to be courteous and kind when others wanted to share their twin stories. I discovered that everybody either is related to a twin or knows someone who is a twin.
5. When I felt impatient after being stopped a dozen times, I thanked God for the blessing He gave me. In a lonely world, two babies can bring a smile to even the longest face or joy to the saddest heart.

Together, my little boys and I fulfilled a mission. We made other people happy. I reminded myself of that often.

---

Nancy B. Gibbs lives in Cordele, Ga., and is the mother of identical twin boys who are now adults. Visit her Web site at [www.nancybgibbs.com](http://www.nancybgibbs.com).



# IS THERE A SEX LIFE AFTER TWINS?

## How to get your sex groove back

BY JOSHUA COLEMAN, Ph.D.

Bob and Marcy's sex life began to deteriorate several months into the pregnancy with their twin girls. Marcy had extreme nausea throughout her pregnancy and then had to be on bed rest for the last two months.

**Marital satisfaction drops for the majority of couples with the birth of the first child and the drop may be even greater for parents of multiples.**

Bob missed the frequency of their sex life and the kind of connection that it gave him to Marcy. He reassured himself, however, that it would only be a short period of time before they could resume the sex life that they'd always enjoyed.

How wrong he was. Like many women, Marcy's sex drive didn't recover in the first year. Not only that, their marriage began to take a turn for the worse. Marcy started feeling more upset with Bob after the arrival of the twins and this, among other things, made her less interested in getting their sex life back on track. Unfortunately, this

is an all-too-common scenario. Marital satisfaction drops for the majority of couples with the birth of the first child and perhaps the drop may be even greater for parents of multiples. Typically, mom's satisfaction drops first, usually within the first few months, and then dad's starts to follow a few months later.

Sex can be a scarce commodity in homes with young children, and even more scarce for parents of twins. It's common for women to experience a decrease or absence of desire while they're nursing and sometimes for months afterwards. Breastfeeding often causes the release of the hormone oxytocin, which can induce feelings of calm and pleasure. Furthermore, breastfeeding can cause problems with lubrication because it can suppress the production of estrogen and ovulation.

Mom's satisfaction drops earlier than dad's because she is recovering from childbirth and dealing with the changes in her body image and hormones, and in many homes, feeling resentful about the way all the parenting and housework have landed in her lap, despite agreements made prior to becoming parents. For some strange reason, these don't appear to be the ingredients to get women in the mood for sex. I say "strange" because stress, exhaustion and resentment don't appear to have a big influence on whether men want to have sex. Generally, they want to have it whenever they can.

And herein lies the rub for many couples: Sex is the biggest predictor of male satisfaction in marriage, but is further down the scale for most women. For women to get in the mood, it often requires that their husbands engage in more of the behaviors that are often missing from new fathers of twins— being active as partners, prioritizing the family, communicating feelings, doing housework and showing affection. Men tend to be more involved with the house and kids when their wives can be appreciative, have sex, not give too much direction about the house or children and not complain too much about them.

Women in our culture, and most others, are socialized to be care-taking and self-denying. As a result, many have a harder time being appropriately self-interested in marriage and in lovemaking. They worry about the well being of a partner so much that they can't relax or be appropriately directive. While some men's sexual abilities also are affected negatively by being overly worried about hurting a partner, they are nonetheless supported by a culture that encourages and rewards their self-interest.

It wasn't that long ago that many women were far less aware of how to achieve orgasm or, even, to know what aroused them. In the late '40s and '50s, the Kinsey Report caused controversy when it revealed that women were as capable of orgasm as men. Jennifer Berman, M.D., and Laura Berman, Ph.D., authors of *For Women Only* note that many women come to their clinic without a basic understanding of their sexual anatomy, or knowledge of what their genitals look like. Many suffer from the belief that they're abnormal if they can't have an orgasm during intercourse, despite the fact that only 20% to 30% of the female population can.

This is compounded by the reality that many men and women believe that men should know what to do in the sexual arena without direction. Some men feel humiliated by a wife's request for a different technique or approach because they take advice as a criticism, or complying with the request as an act of submission. In other words, rather than seeing sex as an interaction requiring approaches unique to each individual, they see it as an expression of their inadequacy as men. In addition, because men often obtain their information about sex from other men or from pornography, they're often wrong about what is exciting or gratifying to women. Sources of information such as pornography are especially problematic as they're geared to a male's sexual fantasy that typically is more graphic and orgasm-driven than women's sexual fantasies or desires.

Most couples also have irrational ideas about the quality and quantity of lovemaking that is going on in other households. Consider the following facts from Barry and Emily McCarthy's book *Rekindling Desire*:

- Less than half of the sexual experiences of well-functioning couples involve equal desire, arousal and orgasm.
- One partner is typically more into sex than the other.
- 5% to 15% of sex experiences are mediocre, unsatisfying or fail.
- 50% of married couples and over 60% of unmarried couples experience sexual dysfunction and dissatisfaction.
- Inhibited desire is the most common complaint.
- One out of three adult women, and one out of seven adult males experience a lack of desire.
- One partner, usually male, initiates and encourages contact.

However, there are many other reasons why sex disappears or decreases in a marriage with twins. Some common reasons are:

- fear of being hurt
- feelings of guilt, shame or self-criticism
- a fear of being controlled
- alcohol or drugs
- anger
- depression, worry and anxiety
- medical problems
- stress and exhaustion

### Recommended reading:

**For Each Other: *Sharing Sexual Intimacy* by Lonnie Barbach (Signet, 1984).**

**For Yourself: *The Fulfillment of Female Sexuality* by Lonnie Barbach (Anchor, 1976).**

***Rekindling Desire* by Barry and Emily McCarthy (Brunner-Routledge 2003)**

***Passionate Marriage: Love, Sex, Intimacy in Emotionally Committed Relationships* by David Schnarch (Henry Holt, 1998).**

***The Sex-Starved Marriage: A couple's guide to boosting their marriage libido*, by Wiener-Davis (Simon and Schuster, 2003).**

## What to do? What to do?

Improving a sex life or getting it back on track takes communication and a willingness to be vulnerable. If your spouse has made requests that you have ignored, consider that you may be avoiding responsibility for the problems in your marriage by ignoring him or her. If you have become withdrawn and defiant as a way to express your disappointment or disapproval of your partner, you may be missing an opportunity to shift the dynamic in a more positive direction and revitalize your marriage or keep it strong. ♡

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Dr. Coleman is a psychologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Author of *The Lazy Husband: How to Get Men to Do More Parenting and Housework*, and *The Marriage Makeover* (St. Martin's Press), he is the father of twin boys and a girl. E-mail him at [dr.joshuacoleman@comcast.net](mailto:dr.joshuacoleman@comcast.net) or visit [www.drjoshuacoleman.com](http://www.drjoshuacoleman.com).

## If you decide not to work on it

### 11 strategies to guarantee a bad sex life

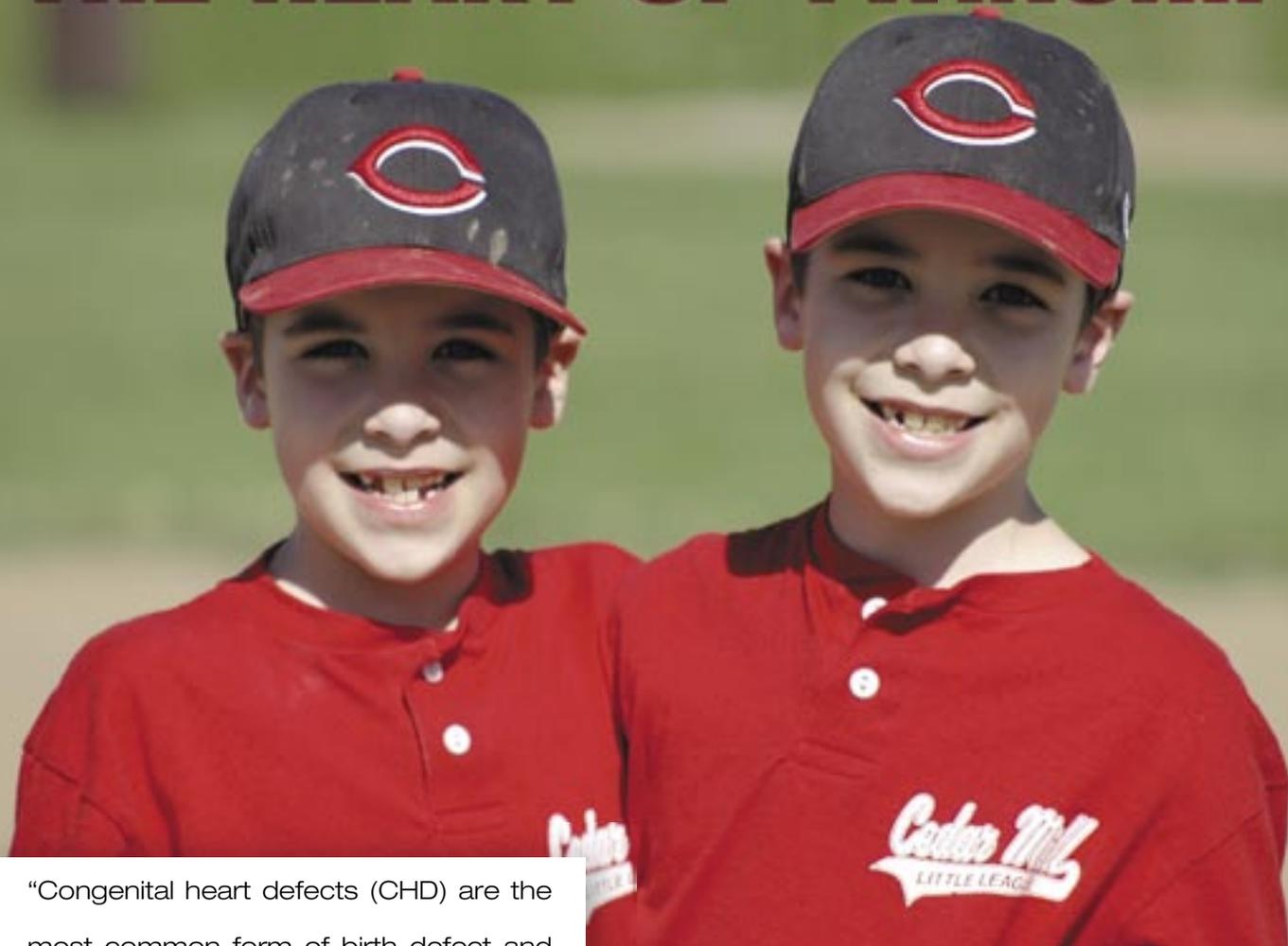
- Never go out on dates.
- When you do go out on dates, talk about all of the problems that exist in your partner or your relationship.
- Criticize your partner's body. Men, you'll find this especially effective if you'd like a bad sex life with your wife.
- Bring up a conflict shortly before bed. That will definitely create a mood.
- Bring up your sexual requests or complaints only during fights. Your partner will really be interested in your feelings at that point.
- Negatively compare your partner out loud to your previous spouse or partners. It's a total turn-on.
- Expect your sex life to be like it was when you were dating or when you were 18.
- Ignore or insensitively handle your partner's requests concerning what excites them.
- Have your children sleep in the same bed as you or stay up so late that sex is guaranteed not to happen.
- Don't work on communication and affection in the rest of your marriage.
- Don't prioritize your own needs because that way you're guaranteed to be too exhausted and stressed out to make love.

## If you decide to work on it

### 13 guidelines to great sex talk

- Begin by expressing feelings of love, admiration or appreciation for your partner.
- Ask your partner what is pleasing or displeasing to him/her as a way of putting you in the more vulnerable position first
- Tell your partner in a loving, affectionate way, what you like or don't like in bed. Be as specific as you can.
- State your needs and wishes clearly as requests, not demands.
- Put your requests in the positive: Rather than saying, "You never want to have sex" or "You're so self-involved in bed," say, "I really like it when we make love. I'm wondering if you have any ideas about what I can do to make it more pleasurable for you."
- Write down what you think the other would like in terms of frequency. Strive to reach a compromise.
- Assume it will be awkward to talk about, even for the most experienced of couples.
- If you feel safe, tell your partner your worst fears about yourself sexually. "I worry that I don't please you," or "I worry that I'm too fat, too small."
- Raise the topic during a period of harmony.
- Make sure that the priority is addressing the issue as friends, not to engage in any particular sexual act.
- Assume that if you raise the topic of sex, other issues may also get raised.
- Expect progress to go slowly. Assume that it will take time to get it to where it once was or to where you want it to be. Don't get discouraged.
- Evaluate your inflated ideas about what sex is supposed to be like in marriage. As Winterson wrote, "Sex in movies and magazines is often portrayed as a fiery furnace, when in real life it's more like central heating with an irregular thermostat."

# THE HEART OF TWINSHIP



“Congenital heart defects (CHD) are the most common form of birth defect and the leading cause of birth defect-related deaths in babies under 1 year of age. About 40,000 babies are born every year in the United States with a CHD, and the cause is unknown in most cases. This makes the incidence of congenital heart defects greater than that of all childhood cancers combined, yet three times the amount is spent on pediatric cancer research than on projects that focus on congenital heart defects.”

—Pediatric Heart Research Association,  
[www.pediatricheart.org](http://www.pediatricheart.org)

After Randy's surgery, Randy, I., and Christopher now play baseball together.

“Randy's heart is showing signs of stress. He needs surgery.”

My husband and I were sitting across the table from our son's cardiologist, as he explained the results of Randy's tests. My stomach tightened. We had noticed Randy's stamina diminish over the summer, but he did not seem sick enough for heart surgery.

I turned to look through the glass at my 7-year-old twins playing together in the next room. They poked at the block tower they'd just constructed and cheered as it tottered and collapsed. My heart hurt. How would they react to the news?

The doctor continued, “After consulting with my colleagues, we feel that Randy would benefit from balloon valvuloplasty.” He went on to describe the procedure in which a balloon is fed up to the heart through an artery in his leg, and when it is inflated it opens the valve. While it would not cure Randy's condition, it could improve his heart function, and delay valve-replacement surgery for many years. We agreed it was his best option, so we scheduled the procedure for the Monday after Thanksgiving.

My twins have always shared matching grins and identical ocean-blue eyes. Since the boys' birth most people have had a

## Tips for parents:

When one twin is hospitalized

- ♥ Talk with each twin about the reason for hospitalization.
- ♥ Prepare the twins by reading kids' books or watching videos designed to inform children about going to the hospital.
- ♥ Honestly describe medical procedures giving age-appropriate detail.
- ♥ Arrange for a pre-operative visit to familiarize children with the hospital environment and medical equipment.
- ♥ Ask to visit with a child life specialist who can help prepare the twins for all aspects of the hospital stay.
- ♥ Inform the hospital in advance that the child has a twin.
- ♥ Spend one-on-one time with each child so each can express his individual fears and feelings.
- ♥ Prepare the twins for separation by telling them specifically when they will be apart and when they will be together.
- ♥ Have each twin keep an item of his sibling's to hold until they return.
- ♥ Have the child bring photographs or familiar items from home.
- ♥ Give siblings a job to do like drawing a picture or making an audiotape.
- ♥ Prepare for visitation after surgery by describing sensory information to the sibling, such as what he will see, hear and smell.
- ♥ Create a "Family Plan" prior to visitation by discussing with all family members the purpose and duration of the visit.

—Barbara Blair, CCLS, Child Life Specialist  
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Portland, Ore.



Christopher feeds Randy ice chips.

We realized we couldn't hold Christopher back because of Randy's limitations. We needed to allow each twin to pursue activities best suited for him. So we asked Christopher what he would like to do.

"I want to play soccer with Randy."

"But, Christopher, that isn't possible. Randy can't play soccer."

"Well then, I don't want to play."

We encouraged him to reconsider, but he was adamant. Finally, I had to acknowledge my twins were young and had spent little time apart. There would be plenty of time to get Christopher involved in athletics, once he got used to the idea they would not always do things together.

That August we had gone on a family camping trip to Silvercreek Falls in Oregon, our home state. As we ventured up the trail on a hike to view one of the falls, we noticed Randy lagging behind. We slowed the pace to keep everyone together, but still Randy struggled to keep up. Worried, I put Randy in the baby jogger with his 2-year old brother so he could ride back to our campsite. My husband and I suspected something was wrong, and we made the appointment with his cardiologist as soon as we got home.

With the date set for his surgery, it was time to explain the procedure to Randy. We showed him a cartoon video of the heart and how the balloon would improve the valve. With two months to wait, we decided not to tell Randy the scheduled date until it came closer. I counted down the days with apprehension, aware that the outcome, good or bad, would forever impact both of my twins.

The day after Thanksgiving we gathered Randy and Christopher close and told them Randy would need to go to the hospital on Monday.

Randy began to cry, "I don't want to go."

Christopher's face was somber.

"Mom and dad will stay with you," I said. "And Christopher will be there too."

Randy wiped the tears off his cheeks and Christopher's eyes

difficult time telling them apart, and tests proved they are monozygotic twins. But a stethoscope easily distinguished Randy from his twin brother. While Christopher's heart echoed a healthy thump, the narrowing in Randy's aortic valve gave his chest the whirring sound of a speeding freight train. Before we took our newborns home from the hospital, Randy was diagnosed with a valve defect called aortic stenosis.

For the first five years, our monitoring visits to the cardiologist rendered an optimistic outlook, with the need for medical intervention unlikely until Randy became a teenager. But when the twins began kindergarten, Randy's prognosis changed. The narrowing in the valve had become more severe, so the cardiologist placed Randy on activity restrictions. He was not allowed to run or engage in strenuous exercise, which meant he could not participate in competitive sports.

I was disheartened. From the moment I found out I was expecting boys, I envisioned my twins rushing the ball down a soccer field or executing a fast break together in basketball. Now my dream was crushed.

And I was disappointed for Randy, who had planned to play soccer just like his older siblings. As soccer season approached, we found ourselves faced with a decision. Do we skip soccer, or sign Christopher up, leaving Randy to watch from the sidelines?

“ At least eight of every 1,000 infants born each year have a heart defect. If your child is born with a heart defect today, the chances are better than ever that the problem can be overcome and that a normal life will follow. Recent progress in diagnosis and surgery makes it possible to fix most defects, even those once thought to be hopeless.”

—American Heart Association, [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).

widened. Neither said a word until Randy pointed to the cartoon their little brother was watching.

“Look!” Randy laughed.

Soon we were all laughing. I knew Randy needed time to think it over and ask questions, but I was relieved the hard task of telling him was over.

At the hospital early Monday morning, the nurse asked Randy to change into a gown. He took one look at the white pajama-like clothing dotted with blue whales and started crying, “I don’t want to wear those. They’re ugly.”

With some gentle coaxing from dad, Randy reluctantly changed into the hospital-wear. As he climbed onto my husband’s lap, Christopher chirped, “Randy, those look cool!” The compliment didn’t erase the frown on Randy’s face, but I could tell it eased his embarrassment about the clothing.

At 8 a.m. the nurses came to take Randy to the cardiac catheterization lab. My husband cradled his small boy in his arms. As he tucked Randy into the bed he whispered, “I’ll see you in a little while, buddy.”

Christopher and Randy waved their good-byes, and I kissed my son’s cheek. When they wheeled him out of sight, I dissolved into a puddle of tears.

To pass the time the three of us walked around. Every 10 minutes Christopher asked, “When is Randy coming back?” All we could offer was, “In a little while.” Despite his apparent anxiety, Christopher’s presence was a comfort to me.

Just after 9 a.m. we returned to the room and Christopher said he felt sick. I rushed him to the bathroom and held a cool cloth on his forehead. Right away he said he felt better. I wondered about Randy. Was this a mysterious twin moment when Christopher sensed something was wrong? I quickly brushed the thought aside, dismissing the incident as nerves.

Minutes later the nurse arrived to give us a report. “The procedure is finished and we’re happy with the result. Randy is in recovery.”

When they wheeled Randy into the room, two months of anxiety melted into relief. As the nurse talked to me about Randy’s care, she mentioned the anesthesia had made Randy sick. For a moment I pondered the correlation between Christopher’s sudden nausea and Randy’s post-operative vomiting. Both had occurred around the same time. I decided I would never know if the incidents were related, but I could plainly see my twins share a special bond. That afternoon, Christopher appointed himself to Randy’s care, feeding him ice chips and loading the VCR with movie requests. And Randy invited Christopher to join him in the hospital bed where, side-by-side, they watched videos.

Randy returned to school two weeks later. And in the spring, to my delight, he received his doctor’s approval to join the baseball team with Christopher. The third game of the season Christopher caught a fly ball and hurled it to Randy, who tagged the runner at second—a double play. They celebrated with congratulatory winks and high-fives. It was a sports moment like I’d always envisioned, but with a joy greater than I’d ever imagined. ♡

Jennifer S. Dahlen is a freelance writer who lives in Portland, Ore., with her husband, twins and younger son.

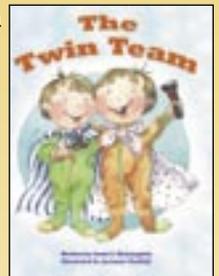
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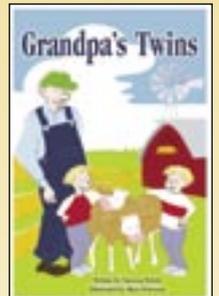
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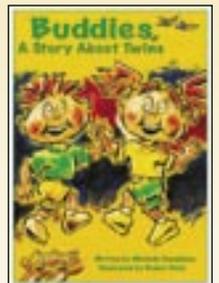
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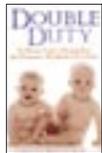
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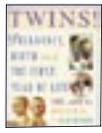
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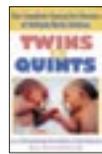
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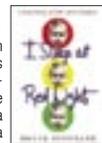
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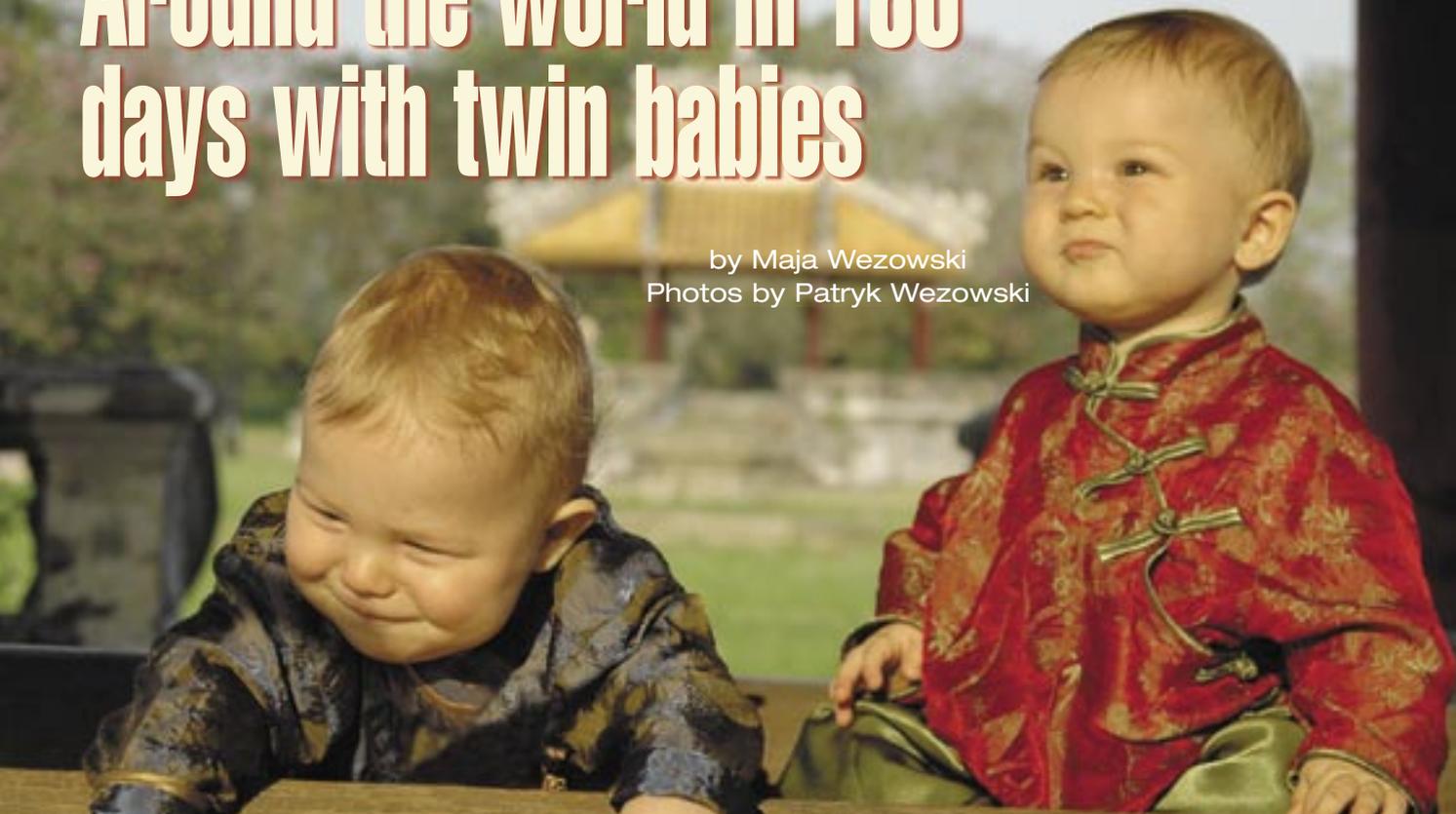
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What's it like to be a twin? Nicole knows because she is a twin. A potpourri of facts, witty little riddles and history, the book will appeal to all families with multiples. *Hardcover, 32 pages.*



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# Around the world in 180 days with twin babies

by Maja Wezowski  
Photos by Patryk Wezowski



Aiden and Noe at a Chinese temple in Hue, Vietnam

*If you think traveling is out of the question when you have young twins, we say you are wrong. It is a lot easier than you might think. Aiden and Noe, 9-month-old Polish twins, experienced a six-month trip through Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, California and Mexico. The budget was \$75 a day. How do you manage that without going crazy?*

“Are you courageous or crazy?” an Australian we met camping near Melbourne asked me while I was cooking for my 1-year-old twins. He threw some meat on his barbecue.

“A bit of both,” I replied. Many people asked us similar questions during our six-month journey around the world with Aiden and Noe. When they turned 9 months old, we took off from our home in Antwerp for Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, California and Mexico. Our parents and friends were terrified by the idea and warned us of dangers, but the experience was much safer than they imagined it would be.

Before our twins were born we had cultivated a dream of traveling around the world. When Aiden and Noe came, there was no doubt they would go with us. As journalists, we discovered that there was very little information on traveling with babies. Most books gave advice for children 2 or 3 years of age and older.

## Financing our dream

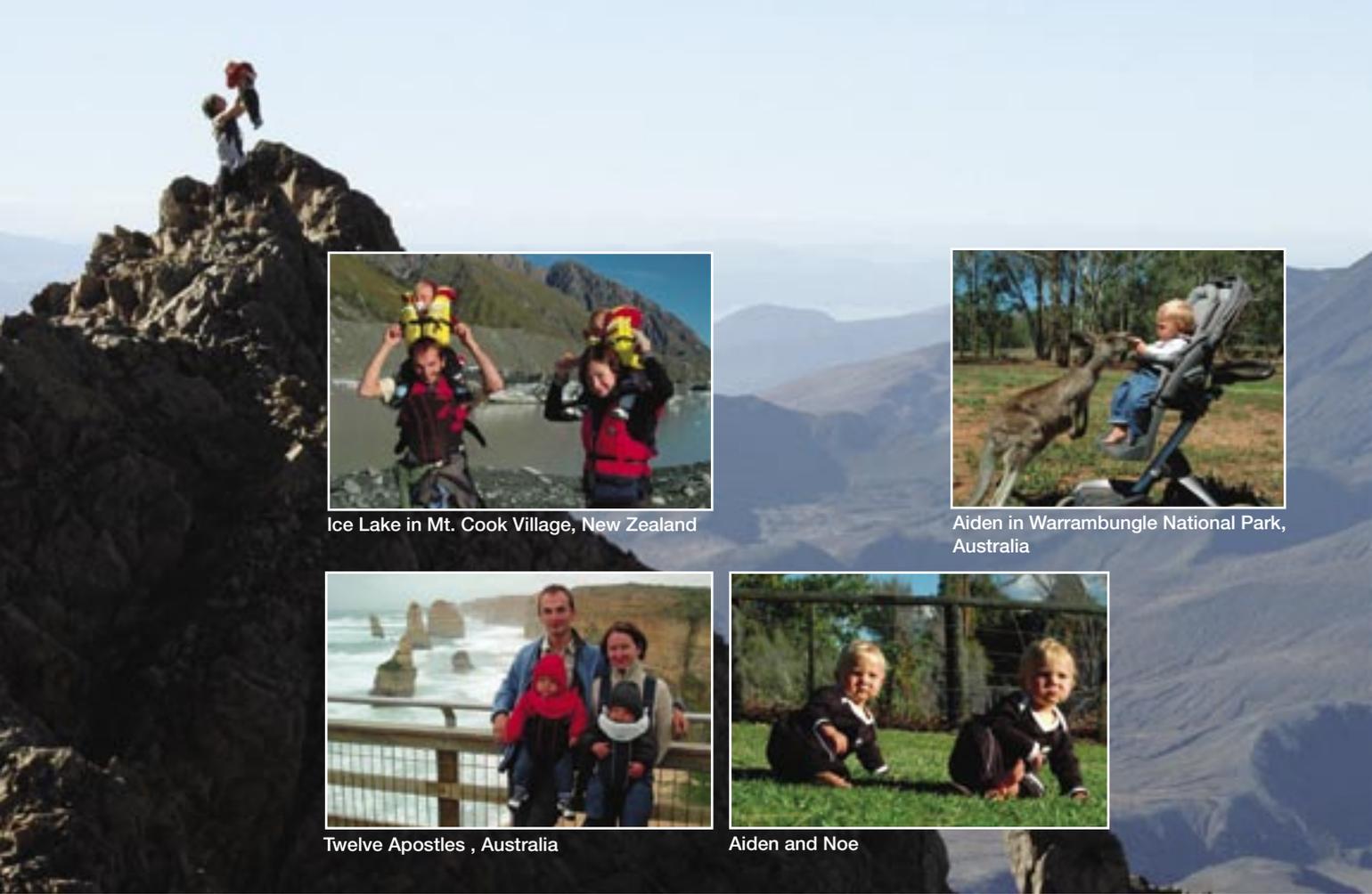
Thanks to the support of the Belgian magazine Kind&Co, we found sponsors to make our dream come true. We never counted on tour operators or expensive hotels. Our budget was

\$75 a day for all expenses of the whole family. In Vietnam and Mexico we used only public transportation. In New Zealand we hired a mobile home and in Australia we bought a rusty van. In California we slept in a hired eight-seater van and asked strangers to let us sleep in their homes. Our parents and friends were terrified by the idea, but the experience was a lot safer than they feared it would be.

## Hands free

If you have twins, you know that taking care of them is a full time job. With our twins we had just enough manpower: We each had one twin to carry. But how can you have your hands free to cook, write or rest? Each of us had a big backpack and a baby in a carrier in the front. Step by step, we became experts in juggling twins and luggage, while keeping our hands free.

The need for space grew symmetrically with our babies and their expanding interest in the world around them. The first month in Vietnam the ideal solution was a child restraint [leash] on a belt. We fixed it to a rope stretched between two trees so Aiden and Noe could safely play on the grass. With the restraint



Ice Lake in Mt. Cook Village, New Zealand



Aiden in Warrambungle National Park, Australia



Twelve Apostles , Australia



Aiden and Noe

on, our twins could also sit safely on a chair in the restaurant and we could eat in peace. Children, however, are full of surprises. While I was looking at my plate in a restaurant in Nha Trang, Aiden took a leaf from a nearby plant and started chewing on it. The waiter assured us that plant was not poisonous—but the one next to it was.

In Australia, when the guys learned to crawl easily and required more space, they played in an inflatable swimming pool. Without air it could fold up to fit in a shoe box for traveling.

In Mexico, Aiden and Noe learned to walk. In each hotel room they found things that were not safe and that we did not foresee. Therefore, we began to ask the same two questions of the receptionist: “How is the floor?” (the surface had to be clean enough) and “Is there a cupboard?” (to keep our belongings from baby hands). After a while we had to add a third standard question: “Can you close the bathroom door?” Every parent knows that forbidden places are the favorite toys for children and what one twin does, the other one will follow after very soon. Bathrooms of cheap hotels are obviously forbidden places for young twins.

## On the road

Throughout most of the journey we cooked for ourselves every day. We used kitchens in restaurants on the way, a camping stove or a portable heating device, depending on the circumstances. The first time Aiden and Noe ate restaurant food was

in Mexico. Luckily the guacamole never gave them upset stomachs. During long journeys by bus we always gave them only powdered milk.

In six months’ time we experienced all travel modes: plane, train, bus, van, car, motorbike and riksja. For each leg of the journey, we found a travel solution. For long distances, we preferred to travel by night. Fifteen hours in a bus at night seemed easier than three hours driving during the day. If we had to travel by day, we chose the time during their daily nap. Of course ,we could not avoid difficult situations: The guys sometimes jumped on the seats of other travelers, licked the windows and ate the safety belts.

The most annoying experience we suffered was in a Mexican bus one night. Two hours before arriving in the mountain town of San Cristobal, Aiden woke up crying and I could not console him. I decided to give him his bottle of milk. At the same moment, the road became very windy. Everything Aiden drank landed on him, me and the bus floor. The only dry thing I had left to dress him in was my sweater. From that moment on we always remembered spare clothes.

What if your baby cries along the way? Stay calm, or at least try to. This is the only solution in situations when you too feel like screaming. I remember our experience on the bus to Veracruz. Both Aiden and Noe wanted to sit on my lap, alone. It was impossible to make them both happy or to distract them. Each of them



Aiden on Franz Josef Glacier, New Zealand



Aztec Pyramids, Teotihuacan, Mexico

cried by turns, three hours in total. I tried to assure myself that the other passengers did not mind it so much as me. For them it was only extra noise while my heart was breaking hearing my unhappy children.

One of the kindest surprises we experienced came in California. Because our hotel costs exceeded our budget, we resorted to pushing doorbells while holding a baby and asking strangers if we could sleep in their houses for one night. There was no other way. One of three American families invited us with open arms and we had the chance to meet great people. We never suspected it would be so easy.

## Have fun

Traveling with babies is an adventure that controls all your daily activities. Your child decides the rhythm of the journey. It is also 24 hours a day together. We never relied on child care. We even went to the movies in Wellington with our twins. It was a big challenge for us as partners. In all the mess, remember to have fun. Forgetting milk or diapers is not a big deal, you will find them in even the smallest Vietnamese town. The best aids to traveling with children are a relaxed attitude and sense of humor. Do not forget to take those with you. ♡

Maja and Patryk now live in Bercham, Belgium, with their 18-month-old twins Aiden and Noe. For a map of the Wezowskis' route around the world and more photos from their travels visit [www.twinplanet.net](http://www.twinplanet.net).

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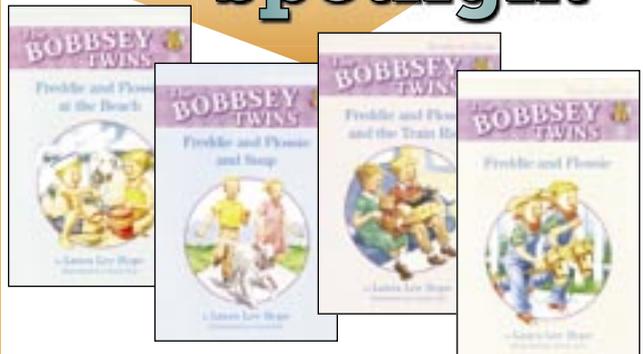
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## TWINS Bookshelf Spotlight



**The Bobbsey Twins**

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## ◀ Diaper dress

An estimated 20,000 diaper changes inspired a mother of triplets to create the Diaper Dress product line. Thanks to her creativity, you can decorate your Diaper Genie to blend with your nursery color scheme and theme. The Diaper Dress is available in 11 machine-washable fabrics. Available for \$30 each from [www.diaperdress.com](http://www.diaperdress.com).



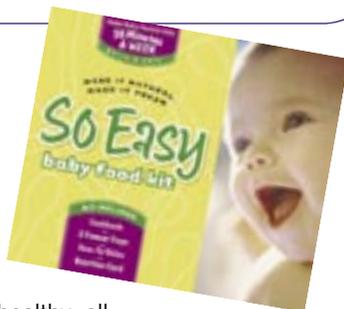
### Shoes for little Houdinis ▶

Tired of your twins untying each other's shoes? Houdini Shoes by Preschoolians can help. The all-new flexible Houdini shoes, "a trademarked feat of engineering," according to the company, are easy for parents to get on but practically "impossible for even the most promising child to remove." Preschoolians, for children from birth to 3, also feature a unique VisuFit clear bottom to help ensure proper fit. Best of all, Preschoolians offers a 40% discount on an entire order for families with multiples. Shoes sell from \$27 to \$37 per pair. Visit [www.preschoolians.com](http://www.preschoolians.com) for more information, or call (800) 998-1322.



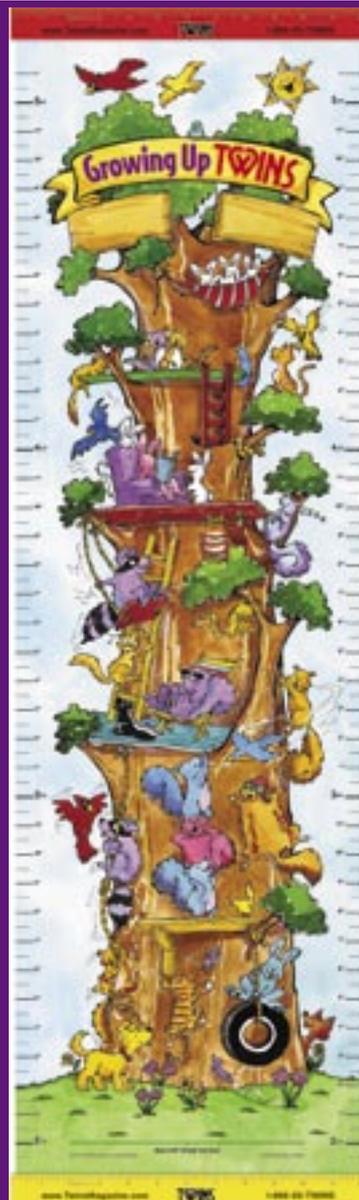
### Summer's bounty ▶

The award-winning Fresh Baby So Easy Baby Food kit, designed by a mom of 8-month-old twins, helps you make a week's worth of baby food in 30 minutes. It is easy to use, comes with a book, video, nutrition tip cards and freezer trays. If you want to feed your babies healthy, all-natural foods instead of jars of processed baby food, and save money, the So Easy Baby Food Kit makes it easy. Available for \$34.95 at [www.freshbaby.com](http://www.freshbaby.com), or by calling (866) 403-7374.



### Double duty ▶

The chalkboard/splat mat protect your floor during mealtime and flips over for little Picassos to draw or work on other art projects. It also travels well—as blanket for picnics or at the beach. The 35 X 35 mat sells for \$26. The placemat is also a chalkboard that flips over to the placemat side to protect your twins' food and messes from dirty restaurant and picnic tables. The 12 x 17 ½-inch mat sells with chalk and eraser for \$15. From Pig Pen Designs, both are available at [www.pig-pen-designs.com](http://www.pig-pen-designs.com), by e-mail from [orders@pig-pen-designs.com](mailto:orders@pig-pen-designs.com) or by calling (303) 841-4445.



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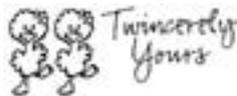
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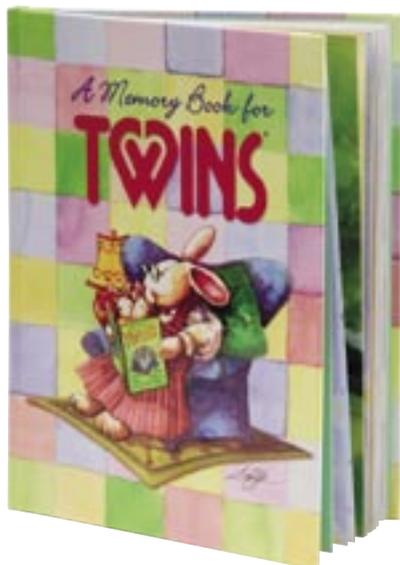
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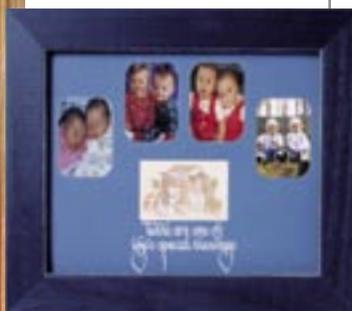
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SF90032 10" x 12" \$19.99 each

## "The Twins Room" Door Hanger

**NEW!** Everything is ducky with this cute framed print to hang on your twins' doorknob. The 3½" x 5", white, framed print comes with a green double satin ribbon to hang it from a doorknob, door or wall. Packaged in a white toile coordinated gift bag.

SS05001 \$13.95 each



## Twin Hearts

**NEW!** Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of the gift of twinship and the promises and encouragement a mother gives to her children in return. Available with blue, pink or yellow border, with matching ribbon. 11" x 14" matte print comes with a gift envelope to save a special letter for each twin. Also available: SS05003 5" x 7" card for \$3.25. Available in three colors: blue, pink and yellow.

SS05002 Unframed Art \$16.99 each

SS05003 Cards \$3.25 each



*Be sure to include your color choice 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.

## Tiny Fingers and Tiny Toes

**Celebrate twins and create a lasting keepsake!**

Do-it-yourself kit comes with non-toxic ink pad and an extra verse-and-hand/footprint page in case you goof. Designed exclusively for us. Perfect gift for grandparents. Openings for twin photo alongside each unique "print". Frame is white painted wood. Overall size 12"Hx15"W.

- A. Fingers - SF90035 \$39.99 each
- B. Toes - SF90036 \$39.99 each



A. 12"-x-15"



B. 12"-x-15"



A. 11"-x-14"

## "Discover Wildlife, Raise Twins" Ceramic Plaque

A sentiment every parent of twins can relate to! This handcrafted ceramic plaque will tickle your funny bone and keep your sense of humor charged when you most need it. Leather hanger. 5 3/4"H x 7 1/4"W.

SF90092 \$17.99 each



## "To a Mother of Twins"

A. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11"x14" overall.

SW00022 \$31.99 each



B. 11"-x-14"

## "Pardon Our Mess... Twins Live Here"

B. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11"x14" overall.

SW00021 \$31.99 each

## Twice as Nice Photo Frames

**NEW!**

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



A.

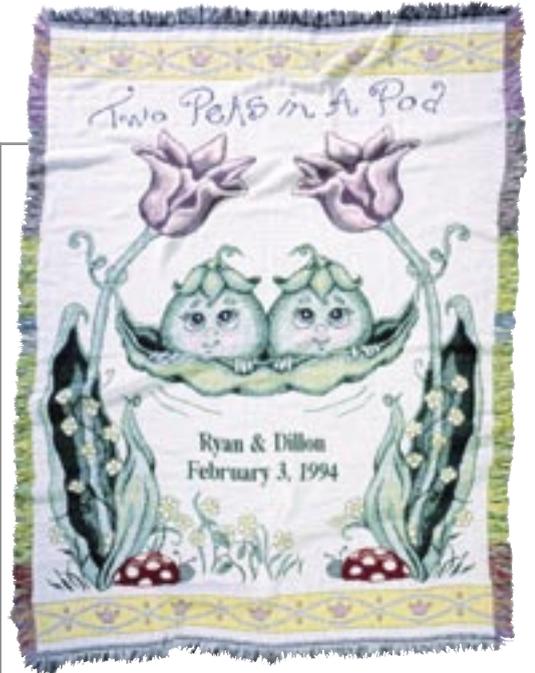


B.

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



## Personalized Twin Afghan

Clever original design created by an artist with twins and exclusive to us. Woven throw in a large size is personalized with your twins' names and their birth date in green embroidery. 100% cotton, washable. 46" x 67". Shipped directly from manufacturer. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. No express delivery.

SF90112 \$49.99 each

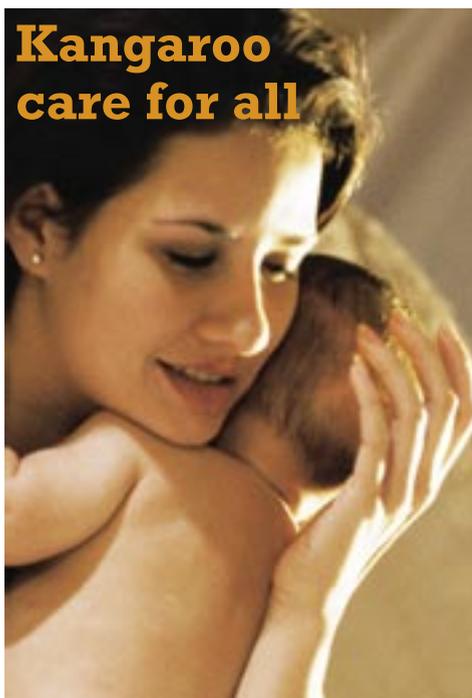
Be sure to include personalization information on the order form or when you order by phone.

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

### Polar body twins

We have twins whom we are going to have tested to see if they are identical. We read that the test is not able to detect polar body twins. I have looked and cannot find out what that means. Can you help me?

Polar body twinning is very rare. Identical twins are monozygotic (MZ), meaning they come from one egg and one sperm. Dizygotic (DZ) twins result from the fertilization of two eggs by two sperm. Sesquizygotic (SZ) twins—or as misnamed, polar body twins—result from one egg and two sperm. The name comes from a small cell that usually does not function but dies. In some cases, the polar body cell may grow and act as a second egg. SZ twins can share a varying combination of genes from each parent and show some features of both DZ and MZ twins. Dr. Charles E. Boklage of East Carolina University School of Medicine has researched SZ twinning.



### Kangaroo care for all

Touch has a profoundly powerful impact on a baby's physical growth and emotional well-being. We've known for some time that kangarooing—skin-to-skin contact between a parent and a baby—benefits preemies. New studies show that kangarooing full-term babies for about an hour immediately after birth is also beneficial and helps babies make the transition from the womb to the world. In an Israeli study, babies who were placed on their mother's chest within 15 to 20 minutes of birth slept better the first night and showed fewer signs of post-delivery stress than babies who were given kangaroo care one hour after birth, or not at all.



### Can you please tell me if the stories that plastic baby bottles contain chemicals toxic to babies are true?

You likely are referring to bisphenol-A (BPA), a synthetic chemical found in clear, hard plastics such as baby bottles, refrigerator containers, water bottles, toys and pacifiers. The concern is that BPA can leach from products under high heat and alkaline conditions, depending on the age, condition and wear of the products. BPA has been linked to adverse effects on reproduction, the immune system, behavior, learning and the brain. Damage in babies can be irreversible. Despite plastics industry trade research that BPA is safe as it is now used, evidence is mounting that the risk is real. Many independent scientific studies support the findings of the original study by University of Missouri-Columbia researcher Frederick vom Saal. According to vom Saal, safe alternatives are readily available. The California legislature is considering a ban on the use of BPA in products for children under 3.

### 5 little things you can do to make life in the NICU better

- 1 Names are personal. If the nurses call you "Mom" and you don't like it, speak up and politely let them know how you want to be addressed. The same goes for your babies; ask politely that they be called by their names. And be sure to learn the names of your babies' nurses and greet them by name when you enter the NICU.
- 2 Ask volunteers or aides to take pictures of you kangarooing or snuggling with your babies.
- 3 Bring photos of your family to put on the isolette. Ask if you can bring a stuffed toy, or leave a tape of your singing or talking to your babies that can play when you are not there.
- 4 Accept the help of social workers, chaplains and other support staff.
- 5 Ask the nurses to let you know when you can dress your babies in their own clothes.

## "Me do it"



Toddlers learning to dress themselves can be both a curse and a blessing. They can take forever and end up frustrated and crying, or beaming with pride at their accomplishments. Twins can help each other get dressed, unless they both want to wear the same shirt.

Avoid open-ended questions such as "What do you want to wear?" Ask instead: "Do you want to wear the shirt with the turtles or with the penguins?" If you have only one shirt of each, set the rules before you offer choices. For example, say: "Today, your brother gets to choose his shirt first and you get to choose your pants first."

Expect very little from 2-year-olds. They can pull on T-shirts, socks and elastic-band shorts or pants. You will have to zip, button and buckle, but use it as teaching time. Soon, they will be able to finish a zipper you start, and then handle large buttons after you line up the first one. Help them with pull-on shoes by putting stickers inside the heel that help them figure out right from left.

If you are in a hurry to get them dressed, make a big deal of today being "Mommy's day to choose." You may get away with it if you laugh and make it funny for them.

## CURIOUS CLIMBERS

**A**re your twins curious explorers who love to climb on every stick of furniture? Do they slide furniture around to create their own little Mount Everests? Twins are especially adept at climbing and help



Lily and Seth, 22 months

each other over and up hurdles that would stop any singleton. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission about six young children die each year from furniture falling on them. Another 8,000 to 10,000 are treated annually in emergency rooms. You can avoid becoming a statistic: Anchor bookshelves and chests to the wall. Document #5004 at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) includes illustrations on how to use angle braces and anchors to secure furniture.

## COOL THE COUGH



If your twins have a cough, you can forgo the cough syrup. Pediatricians at Penn State Children's Hospital found in a study of 100 children that giving lots of fluids and using a cool mist vaporizer to treat night coughs is just as effective as giving cough syrup.

### SCHOOL PREP

Twins have the comfort of having each other in a new preschool or kindergarten setting, but some children are just naturally clingier than others, even among twins. Often it results from parents who are fearful and give their children excessive warnings to be careful and dwell on the dangers in the world.

"To prepare a child for preschool, talk to your child about the separation emotionally and not intellectually," said University of Alabama at



Birmingham early childhood education expert Jerry Aldridge, Ed.D. "It's better to say 'Dad loves you and will

miss you today, but when I pick you up after school I'll be so happy to see you,' instead of 'If you don't go to school you won't learn what the other kids learn.'

To prepare for the "first day," visit the school several times in advance, but not too far ahead of time. Introduce your children to the teachers, show them the playground and talk to them about what fun they will have.

Read good books together, such as *Arthur Goes to School* and *Kindergarten Kids*.

When the big day arrives, tell them you will say good-bye and then return to get them after they play and have snacks. When you say good-bye, be confident and upbeat. And be on time to pick them up.

## Take the scare out of Halloween



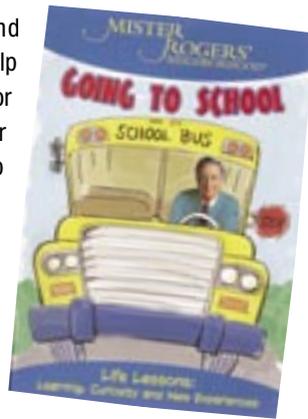
Kayla and Kristen, 3 years

In the days leading up to Halloween, children are bombarded with stories of witches, ghosts and goblins. Young children can't separate reality from fantasy and believe anything is possible. Help your children understand that the stories are "pretend" and assure them that they are safe. If they believe monsters are lurking in the closet or under the bed, use the stand-by spray bottle remedy. Give your twins a spray bottle of water and tell them to spray away any monsters. (If your twins are willing to share a bottle, you may avoid a water fight at bedtime.)

Halloween costumes with scary masks, green faces or mutilated body parts can be disturbing to a 3- or 4-year-old. Allow your little ones to pick their own costume. They likely will choose characters they are comfortable with, such as Barney, ballerinas, cowboys or storybook characters. Popular twin themes are king and queen, Jack and Jill, dog and cat, peas in a pod and other pairs or opposites.

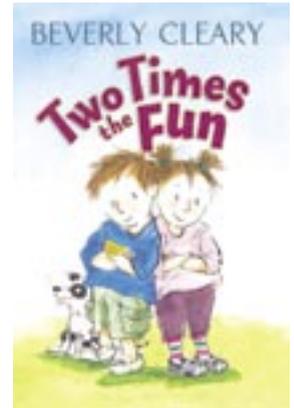
## GOING TO SCHOOL WITH MISTER ROGERS

**A** new DVD/VHS and companion book help prepare children for school life. Mister Rogers' Neighborhood: Going to School includes episodes on riding a school bus, feelings about going to school and learning. The book offers many tips to help parents reduce stress about school and help children become better learners. About \$15 each.



## New book for twins

Beverly Cleary has a new book out, *Two Times the Fun*. Jimmy and Janet, characters based on Cleary's own twins, have their own likes and dislikes but always have each other to play with. For ages 3 through 7, it is a compilation of four separate picture books—*The Real Hole*, *Two Dog Biscuits*, *The Growing-Up Feet* and *Janet's Thingamajigs*. Available from TWINS Magazine Bookshelf, [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) or by calling (888) 55-TWINS.



# "Never work harder than your child!"

—Love and Logic cardinal rule for helping your twins with school work, [www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com), (800) LUV-LOGIC

## AVOID MORNING CHAOS

Conflicts sometimes arise when one twin is a quick starter and the other a sleepy head. The smallest remark or incident can become a crisis. The time to head off trouble is the night before. Talk about the fact they like to start their days differently and get them to agree to certain things they will do to keep mornings peaceful... then calmly remind them of their agreements in the morning if tension starts building. Here are some practical pointers:



### The night before

- Set an alarm clock for your kids
- Select clothes
- Set the breakfast table
- Put all backpacks, jackets, gloves and hats by the door

- Review a checklist (with pictures) of routine

### In the morning

- No TV
- Eat breakfast, always
- A "well-wish" for the day from each twin to the other (For example, one twin says to the other: "I hope you get to do art today.")
- Kiss family members good-bye

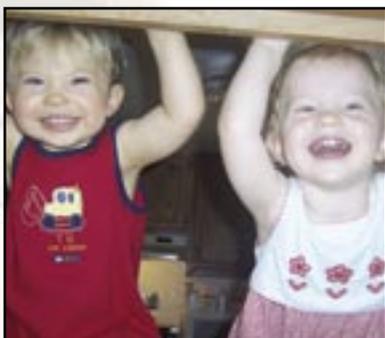
∴ **Generational** >>>  
**double takes**



# Double Takes

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

**1∴** Harry (l.) and Eugene 81 years  
Stewartstown, Philadelphia Grace (l.) and Clara 2 years  
(granddaughters of Harry)



**2∴** Danny and Alexandria  
21 months  
Rio Rico, Arizona



**3∴** Kelsey and Ashley  
5 years  
Fayette, Missouri



**4∴** Kyle and Andrew  
7½ months  
Egg Harbor, New Jersey



**5∴** Jakob and Kaycie  
5 years  
San Mateo, California



**6∴** Corey and Chloé  
20 months  
Southborough, Massachusetts



**7∴** Matthew and Grace Anne  
2½ years  
Ft. Smith, Arkansas



**8∴** Elliot and Gavin  
6 months  
Bonney Lake, Washington



**9∴** Kimberly and Stephanie  
5 years  
Lindenhurst, New York



**10∴** Logan and Lilly  
3 years  
Little Rock, Arkansas



**11::** Zoe and Zane  
19 months  
Webb City, Missouri



**12::** Carly and Caitlin  
6 years  
Plainview, New York



**13::** Alyssa and Emma  
15 months  
Fillmore, California



**14::** Alexander and Joshua  
2 years  
Rochester, New Jersey



**15::** Louis and Edward  
8 months  
Staten Island, New York



**16::** Aria and Ziya  
6 months  
Coral Springs, Florida



**17::** Kaitlyn and Ella  
7 months  
Chicago, Illinois



**18::** Kennedy and Kameron  
8 months  
Upland, California



**19::** Cooper, Dalton, and Hayden  
16 months  
Spicewood, Texas



**20::** Sarah, Zachary, Solomon, Harrison  
5½ (l and r) and 8½ (center)  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

## Photo Tips

*What we are looking for:*

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

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

### **Please be sure to:**

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

### **Send your twins' photograph to:**

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

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

20 - ZD  
17 - MZ  
17 - MZ, ZM, ZD  
16 - ZM  
15 - ZD  
14 - ZD  
13 - ZD  
12 - ZD  
11 - ZD  
10 - ZD  
9 - MZ  
8 - ZD  
7 - ZD  
6 - ZD  
5 - ZD  
4 - ZD  
3 - UNK  
2 - ZD  
1 - 81 year-olds; MZ and the 2-year-olds

*Based on parental reports:*

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## My twins say the cutest things

I am a mum of a 4-year-old boy Brad and 2-year-old twins Alexander and Jacob. Often Brad would call the boys “brothers” because he couldn’t tell them apart. By the time he was 3, he pretty much knew who was Jake and who was Alex. My mother still is unable to get it right and is always amazed that Brad can tell the difference. One day she asked him, “How do you know who is who?” He replied, “Well, Jake has a ‘J’ in his name and Alex has an ‘A.’” “That’s right, Brad,” I replied, “but when you look at them how do you know?” His reply was quite simple, and a little bit exasperated: “Well, they have wrong faces.”

Debra Brown  
Penetanguishene, Ontario, Canada

When I get my 4-year-old identical twin girls ready for preschool, I let them tell me how they want me to do their hair. Cecelia came into the bathroom first and asked for a ponytail in back. Mackenzie came in the bathroom next and, without seeing her sister, asked for the same hairstyle. When Mackenzie came out of the bathroom, they discovered they had the same hair. Cecelia grabbed her own ponytail and her sister’s and exclaimed, “Look, Kenz, we’re twins!”

Suzie Haglund-Carney  
Rochester, N.Y.

I am the mother of 2½-year-old twins, Johnny and Courtney. Last Memorial Day, on our way to the cemetery for the Memorial Day

service, my husband, an army reservist who recently returned from a deployment in Iraq, was dressed in his military uniform. When our son asked, “Where are we going?” my husband replied, “We are going to pay respect to all the soldiers who died so that we can be free.” After thinking about his dad’s explanation, Johnny replied “But I’m not free... I’m 2!”

Tiffany Werner  
via e-mail

I taught my 16-month-old boys Johnny and Arto the word “nice” very early. I would rub their heads and say, “Be nice to brother,” when they were being mean, so they learned to be nice from early on. Well, when they see other kids doing something mean, they tell them to be nice and they rub their heads. The other day I heard Arthur in the playroom yelling “Niiiiicccce.” He was by himself, so I peeked in and he was yelling at one of his toys that wasn’t cooperating! I laughed out loud and now he tells everything to be nice. He couldn’t get his towel off of his head so he started crying and screaming, “Be nice!”

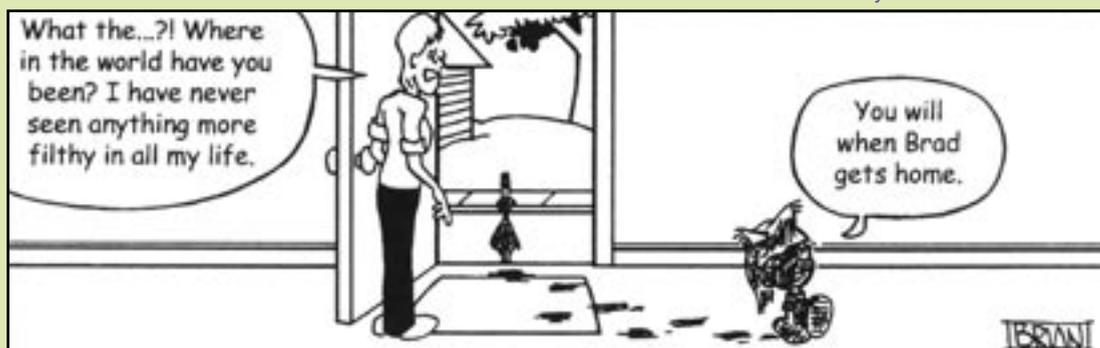
Jackie  
Virginia

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

## Twin Vision

By Brian and Brad Jones



# PERSONALIZED STORY BOOKS

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

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

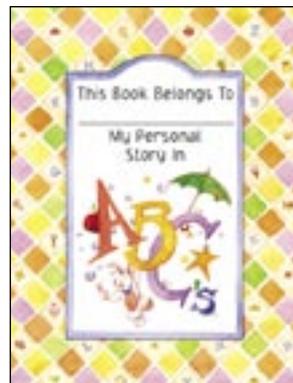
To find out what is important to your children **discuss the fill-in sections of these books** with each twin. This is your chance to allow your children to ask questions and gain quality time with each twin, away from the TV and computer games. **You'll be amazed at what you will learn about how your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

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

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

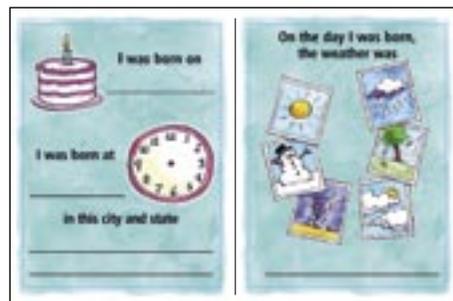
## My Personal Story in ABCs

**1** Teach the alphabet in pictures and words, with more than 20 places for **filling in personalized information** about your twin—birthday, your **family's details**, home address, Mommy's and Daddy's names. Lavishly illustrated by Jerianne Van Dijk, the outstanding artist who illustrated the popular TWINS Lifetime Memory Books. 32 pages. 8.5 x 11 inches. Softbound. **\$15.95**



## A Very Special Twin Story

**2** Your child is the “Star” and producer of this story. Dozens of **places to fill in details about the time your twin** was born, the city where the family lives, **favorite colors**, games and activities. Wonderfully illustrated by artist Jenny Campbell. 32 pages. 8.5 x 11 inches. Softbound. **\$15.95**



Buy 2 of the same book, or **Mix 'n Match**....have a different personalized story for each child.

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Insightful TWINS Magazine articles from experts and parents regarding toddler age multiples (298 pages)

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Exclusive, colorful chart celebrates growth milestones of twins during their early years (40" high x 12" wide)

➤ **TWINS Special Report: Discipline Without Raising Your Voice**

Helpful compilation of TWINS expert advice regarding discipline and behavioral issues (56 pages)

➤ **TWINS Special Report: A Guide for Parents Who Want Their Twins to Share a Classroom**

An intelligent report to help parents persuade schools to allow twins to remain in the same classroom (25 pages)

➤ **TWINS Special Report: Separate Classrooms or Together?**

Fascinating collection of TWINS articles regarding unique schooling challenges for multiples (58 pages)

This packet also includes:

- 12 Issue **Subscription to TWINS™ Magazine**
- **Psychology of Twins**
- **Nighttime Parenting**
- 3 Unframed Pieces of **Twins Art**



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Please allow two weeks for delivery of the package.