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On the Cover:

These 6-month old precious identical twin boys, Oliver and Harrison are from Green Bay, Wisconsin. Proud parents Brian and Angela



are committed to living 'green' by using cloth diapers (dad Brian even makes their own laundry detergent

they use!) Mom, Angie is involved in her local Mothers of Multiples club in Green Bay and recently formed a Monday morning get-together for other mothers at a local coffee shop. They are enjoying being parents to these beautiful twin boys!

**Cover Photography by Aubrey Wygalak of Photos by Aubrey visit her website at: www.photobyaubrey.com

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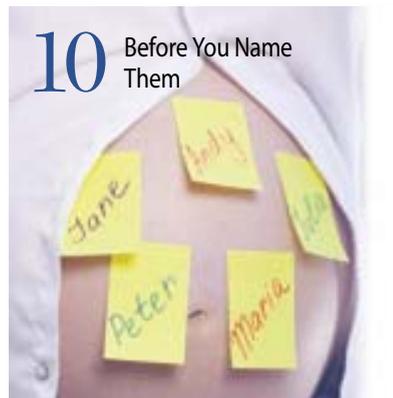
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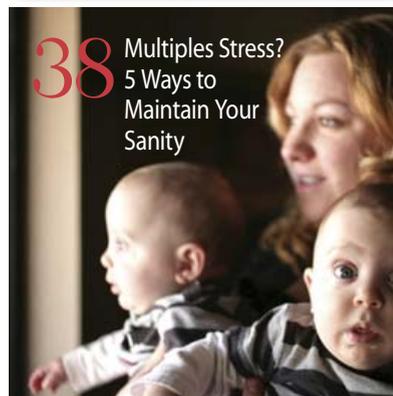
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Some of my most favorite holiday memories with my twin boys

I remember when...

- My twin boy's very only 8-months-old and we dressed them up in the absolute cutest matching holiday outfits. It was a very special and memorable Christmas for us since it was their first one. My dad dressed up like Santa Claus for our twins' club holiday party and my boys really thought their Granddad was actually Santa Clause (they weren't the only ones in our twins club to think that, either since he played the part so well!)
- When they were 1-years-old and after opening their presents, we used some of the wrapping paper on the floor and wrapped them both up together like a giant present—it was so cute and they loved the ribbons and bows!
- When the boys were 2-years-old and discovered that the Christmas tree would actually fall down and crash to the ground if they both pulled on it at the same time! They realized this only after doing this three times and before we had to anchor our tree that year!
- When they were 3-years-old and we stood in line for a super long time to visit with the Santa at the mall. Waiting in line when you're 3 is extremely tough, too! When we finally got up to see Santa, Nick had more interest in looking at the gifts under the tree then sitting on Santa's lap and James' climbed up on his lap, scrunched up his nose and told Santa his breath stunk!
- The yellow snow incident... at the age of 4 when both boys discovered that they could make fun squiggly lines by peeing outside and writing their names in the snow leading up to our front door (Ha'pee' Holidays!)
- One year during Christmas Eve service at church everyone was completely silent for the prayer and my precious little guy, Nick asks very loudly, "Mom is this God's house?"
- The year we stayed in a home in the mountains and the boys were very concerned that Santa would not be able to find them. Luckily for us we tracked him on NORAD on Granddad's computer so they could monitor when he would be in Colorado and could see that he wouldn't miss the place they were staying!



I really love this time of year and for the past 12 years my husband Aaron and I have been incredibly blessed with having the very best boys any parents could ever hope for and adding our two younger boys have also been such a blessing in our lives. It's such an amazing feeling for me to see each and every Christmas morning when they wake up so early and are so excited to see what Santa brought for them and to finally open the presents they have been holding and studying for the past month. I

feel so lucky to be able to experience the unbridled joy they feel and to experience the magic that this entire season brings. This is what truly makes it special for me as their mom.

From our family to yours, we truly hope you can capture the magic of this wondrous season and experience the joy that only children can bring to our hearts and homes not only during the holidays but every day of the year! Many blessings to you and yours and we wish for great things for you and your family in 2011!

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa D. Reed, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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A 60 Year Reunion for Three Sets of Twins Born on the Same Day!

It was June 7, 1950 at Burnham Hospital in Champaign, Illinois when a rare event happened... there were THREE sets of identical twin girls all born on that memorable day! The local newspaper ran a story on the big event and it was very exciting for the entire community.

As their 60th birthday was recently approaching, identical twins, Carol Janette and Patricia Joan Payne went in search of these other two sets of twins hoping to reunite with them and see what ever happened to these other girls. "I felt like the age clock was ticking and I really wanted to put together some of the missing puzzle pieces," says Patricia Joan. "I really did not want to have any regrets and this is one thing I just felt like I needed to do."

So Patricia contacted Reminisce Magazine, hoping to enlist their help in possibly locating the other two sets of twins. "I knew it

would be a long shot since they told me that they get hundreds of submissions daily and there was no guarantee they would run my story," says Patricia Joan. Later she learned that they had selected her story to run in their popular "Can You Give Me a Hand?" column. "It was so exciting and had it not been for a faithful subscriber of Reminisce that assisted me, it would have taken me much longer to find the others and am very appreciative to avid readers who do respond."

The reader actually reached out to twins Vicki and Cheryl Childers on Facebook and they then each wrote her a letter from California including their photos and their e-mail addresses. Then, the Childers twins were able to locate the Cox twins, Yvonne and Yvette on Facebook and gave them Patricia Joan's e-mail address. Now all three sets have been emailing each other and are getting to know each other much better

through this new found cyber connection. Congratulations to all three sets of twins and we are happy you all have found each other again!



MULTIPLES OF TWO. From left, Mrs. Ralph Dudley holds Vicki Jean and Cheryl Ann Childers, Cherie Matthews cradles Yvonne and Yvette Cox, and Nell Bonzell holds Patricia Joan and Carol Janette Payne on the evening of June 7, 1950.



Childers Twins Then and Now



Cox Twins Above Age 6 and Now



Payne Twins Above Age 4 and Now

At Rest, Texting and Chatting Triplets

By CLARE LOCHARY originally published for the *New York Times*, November 3, 2010

There was a lot riding on the Virginia-Duke field hockey game last Saturday: seeding in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament for the visiting Cavaliers and a chance for the host Blue Devils to snap a four-game conference losing streak. But perhaps the most important thing at stake was Rachel Jennings's perfect record against her sisters.

Entering the game, Jennings, a Virginia defender, had never lost a game to either of her triplet sisters, Tara, a midfielder at Duke, or Erin, a midfielder at Princeton. "My intensity pumps up when she gets the ball, and it's the same thing for her," said Tara. The three sisters are juniors and are 20 years old. Tara scored her first goal of the season against Virginia, but it was not enough. The Blue Devils' upset bid came up short, and the Cavaliers won, 2-1. Rachel's record is now 6-0 against her sisters. "When one of us gets the ball, it's our personal duty to get on them," said Rachel, the middle triplet, whose team beat Princeton, 2-1, on Oct. 8. "You don't want them to outshine you, as bad as that sounds."

The Jennings sisters are not the first triplets to compete in Division I field hockey — Ashley, Lauren and Melissa Walls were top players at James Madison University two years ago — but the Jennings sisters leverage sibling rivalry to their advantage. They love to play — and win — against one another. It is a quality that has served them well in field hockey, a game in which the ball moves swiftly and is difficult to control, and the fastest, fiercest players thrive. "When you saw them play during high school and you saw them at U.S. events, they were really at each other's throats," Duke Coach Beth Bozman said.

Today the Jennings sisters start for three of the most competitive field hockey programs in the nation. Virginia is ranked No. 3, Princeton is No. 6 and Duke No. 20. Duke and Virginia are scheduled to play each other Thursday in the A.C.C. tournament.

Off the field, they are close, frequently texting and chatting on the phone. Last summer they shared an apartment in Charlottesville, Va., where Erin and Rachel took classes at Virginia, and all three trained for



Matt Riley/ University of Virginia Athletics

Rachel Jennings of the University of Virginia field hockey team.



Beverly Schaefer/Princeton University

Erin Jennings, of the Princeton University field hockey team.



Duke University

Tara Jennings, a Duke University field hockey player.

the 2010 season. On the field, though, it is a different story.

"We've always been super competitive, more competitive than you could even imagine," said Erin, the oldest of the triplets. "Outside the season, we kind of leave that behind. In season, it's definitely smack talk, the whole time, always."

They grew up in Macungie, Pa., with their older brothers, John and Jason, and their parents, John and Beth Jennings. Triplets do not run in the family; the Jenningses were trying for one girl after their two boys when they learned that Beth was carrying three babies. The sisters are fraternal, not identical; friends and family rarely mix them up. Still, they stood out for both their triplet-hood and their athletic abilities.

Their local school, Emmaus High School, is a national field hockey powerhouse. The sisters' stars rose quickly, as they made the Green Hornets' varsity team and then national under-16 and under-19 teams.

"They wanted to be the best and were always trying to be that perfect player," Emmaus Coach Sue Butz-Stavin said. "They had that sassiness and tenacity about them. That's something you can't teach kids."

Eighteen years of sharing a bedroom wore on them, so they decided to attend different colleges. All three were top recruits, but there was still some careful maneuvering to be done by the recruited and the recruiters.

Virginia Coach Michele Madison, then the coach at Michigan State, offered all three a full scholarship to go to East Lansing when they were high school sophomores, but they were determined to separate.

When Madison became the head coach at Virginia in 2006, she said: "My assistant Alex Street and I decided, we really want a Jennings in our program. We decided to take a chance and go after the one we needed the most." That was Rachel, the defender.

Tara was the first sister to make a college decision. She fell in love with Duke's campus and its CAPE (Collegiate Athlete Premedical Experience) program, which is designed for female athletes interested in premed studies. That took Durham, N.C., off the table for her sisters. Erin and Rachel seriously considered Princeton, with Erin more set on an Ivy League education. Rachel wrestled with the choice between

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Virginia and North Carolina, eventually settling on the former. "If you read their college essays, all of them had things about how if they weren't competing with each other, that's what's driven them to achieve things they wouldn't have achieved on their own," said John Jennings, a reconstructive surgeon.

While Tara admits to being the most competitive of the three, she denies her sisters' claims that she is the messiest. Erin is the undisputed neat freak, as well as the best student and the most laid-back. Rachel is the chattiest.

"Rachel is the girl who makes best friends on airplane rides with a stranger," Tara said. "Erin would be the one who would put her headphones on during a plane flight."

When N.C.A.A. field hockey schedules are released in the spring, the Jennings parents have a strategy session to make sure that each daughter gets her fair share of parental cheerleading. They usually split up on fall weekends, to cover more ground. They travel together only when two daughters are going to head to head, a setup that is easier logistically but tougher emotionally, at least for Mom.

"To me, that's the most stressful part of the season," said Beth, a retired general surgeon. "I love it after the game because then everybody's together. But during the game it's horrible."

After the game is not always happy family time. Tara stomped off the field the first time she lost to Rachel, a 4-3 Virginia victory in 2008 in their freshman season. Duke's rocky 2010 season has been a challenge for the youngest triplet, and she is the only one of the sisters yet to reach a national semifinal.

"A big part of me trying to get better and working really hard was the goal of being better than my sisters," Tara said. "I'm not saying I am better, but it definitely made me work a little bit harder. We'll compete in anything — field hockey, grades, a footrace. It just feels better to beat your sisters."

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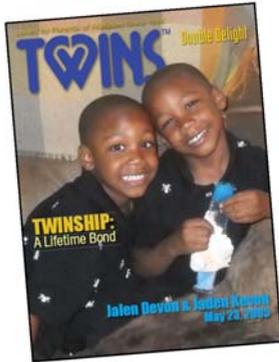


Send us your comments, suggestions, questions about raising multiples or if you need advice on a pressing subject or any other information you want to share with us and your letter/email may be included in an upcoming issue of TWINS™ Magazine. You can also send along a photo of you and your twins/multiples with your email.

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BEFORE *you* NAME THEM

by Ruby Coats Mosher

Do you have names picked out yet? Every expectant parent hears that question dozens of times before their bundle (or bundles!) of joy arrives.

Why is everyone so interested in "Baby's" name? Because it gives him an identity, almost a personality, answers those who have studied the phenomenon. "Every name sends out signals,"

say Linda Rosenkrantz and Pamela Redmond Satran, authors of the book, *Beyond Jennifer and Jason: An Enlightened*

Guide to Naming Your Baby. "It transmits messages and reverberations of its own: a level of energy and intensity of color and sheen, a texture."

Although it is often difficult to come up with a name for one baby, let alone two, three or more, the following are some basic questions expectant parents choosing multiple monikers are best advised to ask themselves.

1. Is each easy to pronounce? Since your children's names will be spoken many times over their lifetimes, try not to saddle any of them with a tongue-twister. Catch potential problems with pronunciation by repeating the name aloud several times in succession. Practice with and without the middle name. Zane Noble, for example, looks great in writing but when spoken, the repeating "n" sounds can fuse into something sounding like Zane Oble. If the speaker tried to pronounce each "n" separately, the name might then sound like Zana Noble.

2. Does each have a pleasing rhythm? While practicing a name for pronunciation, also note the rhythmic quality. Does the name roll off your tongue like a melody or do you prefer it to sound more "sing-along", as in the name "Mary Jane Rein?"

3. Do the initials spell F.A.T.? Children can be charming, kind and innocent. They can also be thoughtlessly cruel. Historically, a school-age "game"

many children play is inspecting each other's initials for dirty words or unflattering names, then taunting their owners. Think of the fun they'd have with Patrick Edward Eubanks, Frances Alice Tatman or Bradley Michael Wright? You can't outsmart a child, but you can do your best to think like one. Examine the initials of a name in every combination of first, middle and last. Watch not only for words but also abbreviated sentences formed by letters that sound like words (a, b, c, l, m, n, p, r, u), Ida May Butts might not be happy with her initials when she goes to school.

Adam P. Matheny, Jr. Ph.D., is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He was also the director of the director of The Louisville Twin Study.

Linda Rosenkrantz and Pamela Redmond Satran, authors of the book, *Beyond Jennifer and Jason: An Enlightened*

A SAMPLING OF BOOKS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED:

- *Beyond Jennifer and Jason: An Enlightened Guide to Naming Your Baby* by Linda Rosenkrantz and Pamela Redmond Satran.
- *Name That Baby: The Complete Guide to Choosing Your Baby's Name*, by Barbara Kay Turner.
- *What to Name Your Baby: From Ada to Zoe* by Maxwell Nurnberg and Morris Rosenblum
- *The New American Dictionary of Baby Names* by Leslie Dunkling and William Gosling
- *The Best Baby Name Book* by Bruce Lansky

4. Is the spelling of each unusual?

Rosenkrantz and Satran advise against deviating the spelling or pronunciation of a common name. For instance, you should think twice about changing the spelling of Cindy to Cyndi because of the potential confusion involved. Also, don't expect others to pronounce Maria with a long "I", no matter how clearly

Continued on page 35

SPECIAL DO'S AND DON'TS FOR NAMING MULTIPLES

Don't Rhyme. Resist the temptation to choose rhyming names. Twenty-two-year-old Karla remembers the confusion caused by her sister's rhyming name. "At school, classmates and teachers would sometimes call me Marla, my sister's name. That really bothered me. The only reason people were confused was because of our names. I mean, I had short brown hair and Marla's

hair was long and blonde—we were totally different."

Don't Make A "Precious Pair". To foster the individuality of your multiples, avoid the temptation to give them names that make it easy for others to lump them into a category; it will be hard enough to keep them from calling your children "the twins". Naming your girls Heather and Daisy, for example, may forever brand them "the flower girls."

Don't Fall Into the Same-Initial Trap. If you cannot resist using same-initial first names, make sure the middle initials are different. There is too much potential for the mix-up of records and other information when there are two J.A. Smiths that went to the same school, have the same parents, same address, same birthday, etc.

Don't Forget Nicknames. We live in a society that loves to shorten names into nicknames. Be sure to consider all possible nicknames. Will it sound like fingernails scratching a chalkboard to you when your daughter, Elizabeth, is called Liz, Betsy or Libby by her friends?

Also, avoid choosing names for your multiples that have the same nickname. Parings such as Robert and Roberta, or Christine and Christopher, offer the potential for mix-ups—some of them embarrassing.

Do Maintain Consistency of Style and Tone. Names can be grouped into categories such as contemporary, classic, artistic, attractive and studious. Rosenkrantz and Satran recommend selecting family names out of one category or another. Keep in mind that some names such as Brittany, sound contemporary, while others, such as Pearl, have an old-fashioned ring to them.

Do Choose Several Names for Each Sex. The ultrasound technician says, "Congrats! You are going to have twin girls." Does that mean you can totally concentrate on names for girls? No way! These tests are not always 100 percent accurate in predicting babies' sexes. Furthermore, there have been cases of a third baby remaining undetected by an ultrasound. Your best bet would be to have an extra name or two for each sex—just in case. ♥

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Have You Hugged Your Twins Today?

by Adam P Matheny, Jr

During the first year of a child's life, a powerful link can be forged between a parent and her infant through the affection exhibited through cuddling. If an infant is well fed and is in a good mood; cuddling reinforces her psychological security. If she is fretful, cuddling can help to blunt the sharper edges of upset.

Thus, whether provided in times of contentment or distress, cuddling is a positive means by which an infant comes into close contact with, and then becomes attached to, important persons. The value of cuddling is so compelling that child experts consider it to be a basic need, ranking right along with nourishment, warmth and sleep.

Adam P. Matheny, Jr. Ph.D., is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He was also the director of the director of The Louisville Twin Study.



A second line of evidence has shown that infants who did not cuddle easily or actually seemed to dislike cuddling represented a somewhat distinct group. These non-cuddlers seemed to socialize less with their mothers and were less likely to smile

easily and spontaneously. During later infancy, non-cuddlers took longer to warm up to strangers and were generally less sociable than other infants of the same age.

According to some theories, the behavior of these infant non-cuddlers was believed to be the product of less positive interaction with their mothers. For example, mothers of these infants seemed to spend less time socializing with their babies through physical contact: touching, holding, and hugging.

Moreover, some mothers of non-cuddlers were themselves described as standoffish, cool or less positively attached to others. In effect, the non-cuddlers were seen to be the product of mothers who initiated less cuddling or responded less to their young infants by cuddling, cradling or hugging.

In recent years, the tendency to hold a mother solely responsible for her infant's reactions to a host of conditions, including cuddling has undergone some revision. This revision recognizes that the individual differences among children may evoke differences in mothers' responses. As a consequence, interaction between mothers and their children is now seen as a two-way street. From this perspective, differences in cuddling behavior among children may be attributed to personal differences among the infants themselves.

INFANT DIFFERENCES

Although research has shown that most parents report that their infants enjoy cuddling, parents with more than one child have noticed that some infants enjoy it more than others. Descriptions of the strong cuddlers depicted infants who settled easily into a cuddling position, relaxed and protested attempts to put them down. Strong non-cuddlers were depicted as rigid, stiff or resistant when cuddled. They seemed less comfortable because they fussed or actively squirmed from one position to another. In other words, strong non-cuddlers seldom relaxed and settled into a cuddling position.

Between these two extremes were the majority of infants, whose cuddling habits were not so pronounced in either direction or whose habits varied by time of day, or for reasons not fully understood. The fact that mothers reported differ-

fully understood. The fact that mothers reported differences among their singleton children's cuddling behavior could simply represent changes in the mothers' expectations for infants born in different years, changes in her experiences with different infants, and so on.

TWIN RESEARCH

There are mothers, however, who do have the unique opportunity to contrast the cuddling behavior of two infants at the same time; these, of course, are mothers of twins. The daily interactions between a mother and her twin infants provide ample opportunity for her to distinguish subtle differences between her twins' cuddling behavior, if such differences exist. On the other hand, given the fact that twin infants share interaction with the same mother whose experiences and attitudes are presumably brought to bear equally on both twins, one might expect the twins' behavior to appear very similar. Should mothers report many contrasts for cuddling behavior between infant twins, therefore, it is likely that these reports may represent inherent

differences in the twins themselves, rather than in the mothering they receive.

For many years, mothers of infant twins participating in the Louisville Twin Study had been interviewed for contrasts between twins on a variety of activities, including cuddling. Interviews with mothers of more than 200 pairs of identical and fraternal boy/boy or girl/girl twins at several points during their infancy indicated that mothers reported differences in their cuddling behavior when the twins were as young as 3-months-old.

Almost 60 percent of the twin pairs revealed these differences at several times throughout infancy. Quite clearly, many mothers detected at least subtle differences in cuddling every time they were interviewed. Moreover, if a mother reported that one of her twins cuddled more than his co-twin at one age, she was likely to report one of the most consistent and enduring contrasts made by mothers of twins followed over time from infancy to 6 years of age.

Comparisons between identical and fraternal infant twin pairs also showed that identical twins were more alike for cuddling

behavior. Mothers of fraternal twin pairs reported that only 10 percent of their pairs are alike; by comparison, mothers of identical twin pairs reported about 50 percent of their pairs were alike. Therefore, one large influence on differences in cuddling appeared to be genetic.

Other than the clear-cut evidence for a genetic influence on cuddling, the infant twins who cuddled less were observed to be more active and generally moved about more, whether asleep or awake. They were also reported to have more difficulty with teething or to have suffered higher incidences of illness, including ear infections. The general picture suggests that within twin pairs, the twin who cuddled less was both more irritable and less easily soothed by cuddling.

The sum total of evidence gained from mothers of twins would suggest that cuddling is not equally effective in providing a sense of security to all infants. Apparently, some infants have a strong need for cuddling while others do not, and some infants are more comforted by cuddling than others.

Continued on page 17

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TODDLERS



The Truth about Santa Claus

by Janet Gonzalez-Mena

One of the tasks all toddlers face is learning to distinguish what's real from what's not. One of the tasks of their parents is teaching them to do so without discouraging the creative use of their imaginations.

These tasks are harder to accomplish than they may seem to be at first glance, as the following examples illustrate: If parents are concerned that their children always tell the truth, what happens when they present Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny as real? Eventually, they'll find out that their parents didn't tell them what they really believe to be true. How will they reconcile that fact with their parents also insisting that their children always tell the truth? Will they understand that their parents weren't lying to them?

A lot of adults remember the period of their belief in these cultural fantasies as magical and wonderful and have no regrets that a fantasy promoted by their parents was an important part of their early lives. They never equated the Santa story, in fact, with lying.

My own childhood experience was different. I believed in Santa until I was 6-years-old. On Christmas night that year, after I was in bed, I overheard my mother and grandmother talking about shopping. Suddenly I realized that they were the ones who had bought the gifts labeled "Santa". I was shocked! Then I was angry! How I could have been so stupid to believe such a dumb story, I thought to myself. No wonder it took some logic stretching—it wasn't even true!

I felt betrayed. I immediately began to question everything adults had ever asked me to accept on faith. I was no longer willing to stretch my logic. Imagine the effect on my logic. Imagine the effect on my religious education! The aftermath of the "betrayal" lasted for years.

When I became a parent, I vowed never to do such a thing to my own children. I made it clear from the day they were old enough to understand that Santa was just a story—a wonderful fantasy with which we could play along. And we did. In our house, he filled our stockings every year and still does to this day, though my youngest child is now 12 years old. Pointing out the fantasy didn't seem to have hurt my children in any way.



On the other hand, a willingness to believe in those kinds of fantasies should not necessarily be discouraged. I remember one Christmas when

one of my sons was talking about Santa as if he were real. I gently reminded him that Santa was a fantasy.

"Oh, yeah, I forgot," he said, and went right on with what he was saying without being the least bit fazed. He forgot?!

Because of my own experience, I'd advise parents of multiples not to become concerned if one twin "believes" and his co-twin doesn't, nor should they shush up the "non-believer". Children tend to cling to what they want to believe; the "truth," even when delivered by a skeptical co-twin or sibling, often doesn't change their minds unless they're ready to be convinced. Let them discuss their beliefs with each other.

Besides, now that I'm older and wiser, I know that everything that is true isn't necessarily logical, nor can it be proven. I'm no longer convinced that I can easily separate reality from fantasy for children. Nowadays, I'm more likely to listen to what children believe than I am to explain the cold, hard facts of what seems to be reality.

So what about lies? Where do they fit in? Where does a lie stop and a story begin? How can you tell if a child is telling a loving fantasy or a boldfaced lie, or something in between? It isn't easy!

Children often say things that aren't true. We all do. We tell a joke; we make up a story for entertainment; or we give an excuse. Toddlers are just beginning to learn about the power of words and their ability to manipulate reality. Toddlers sometimes engage in wishful thinking—saying something is true may make it true, in their minds. So when a toddler tells a lie, she may be more interested in changing reality than in trying to deceive you. If you understand this characteristic of young minds, you'll deal with the situation less harshly than if you don't.

Young children are also still learning to distinguish what's considered real from what's not. That's one of the problems with the Santa, Tooth Fairy and Easter Bunny stories. When children are trying to sort things out in their own minds, they may become frustrated with an adult who continues fantasizing under questioning, just as the adult becomes frustrated with the child who, when questioned, persists in passing fantasy off as real.

Often a lie or a fantasy is really just a difference in perception. When your co-twins are arguing, for example, each may firmly believe his or her own version of the story.

It doesn't help for an adult to step in and decide what is the truth and what is a lie. It is more useful to help the children sort it out themselves. They should be encouraged to give each other feedback as well as explain their own perceptions to each other. It is better if the parent doesn't decide for them what happened, and who was right and who was wrong. Parents won't have to engage in that practice if they let their twins sort out their disagreements starting in toddlerhood. The trick is not to take sides.

This kind of situation provides excellent practice for problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. Parents would do well to help children learn these skills at an early age. They'll have plenty of need for them as they grow up in the closeness of their twinship. ♥

*Janet Gonzales-Mena, of Napa, California, teaches early childhood education at Napa Valley College. She is author of the book **Dragon Mom**, and the mother of five children.*

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CAN THERE EVER BE Enough OF Me?

by Patricia Edmister, Ph.D.

The holidays are a time of excitement for everyone—expectations are high; anticipation of gifts, guests, and food affects everyone; demands on parents' time increase; and tensions can rise for all. The children are no exception, for they are being barraged by the media and in stores to buy, buy, and buy. At preschool they are also busy preparing handmade gifts and

children will talk with each other about what they want Santa to bring or what they want for Hanukkah. These messages are often then carried to the parents in terms of the "I want..."—and that list can seem to change every day.

How do you cope with it all? By bringing the holiday rat race back under your control so that family members don't end up frazzled and disappointed.

ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS

The first thing is for the parents to anticipate potential problems, such as **Time away from home**. Shopping, food preparation, wrapping, traveling—all cut into your time with the children and with each other. The children feel your lack of availability and may increase their demands. Also, with lots of holiday parties, you may need babysitters more often. How do your children react to babysitters and how can you best help them handle that issue?

Fatigue. The children are often involved in many parties at home, at school, at church, at the homes of friends; as schedules change and nap times and bedtimes slide, the children often become irritable. Parents, dealing with their own stress and fatigue, become less patient or tolerant, leading to decreased patience and increased strife at home.

Heightened activity levels.

Again, as the holiday approaches, the children often seem less able to control impulsivity, excitability, and activity, thus making their behavior more difficult to contain. In some children, it seems that

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the increase in eating holiday foods and candy with high sugar content contributes to a higher activity level.

CONTROL EXPECTATIONS

The second objective is to lower expectations to a realistic level. The images we and our children have are often based on an idealized vision of what the holiday should be like. The first step is to determine what family members are expecting in terms of the holiday, especially when it comes to use of time and gifts. Then, discuss those expectations and make sure that they are realistic.

Make Lists. List what each child wants and what each person wants to give to others in the family so that the concept of giving is emphasized. With preschool aged children, we often discover that their lists change with each new commercial seen, so set a deadline for what gifts are being requested and stick to it.

Talk with them about what can reasonably be expected from Santa, or from relatives so that they will not be overly disappointed if they don't get exactly what they want. In addition, discuss gifts that each child wants just for himself, and then also discuss what larger, more expensive gifts they might want which would need to be shared.

Put up a large calendar. With the children, note important days on that calendar, and as you mark off each day, they can see how many more days until the holiday arrives. This can help eliminate some of the "How much longer is it until the holiday, Mom?" questioning. Also, on that calendar, note any parties or other holiday events which will need preparation since often schedule changes can throw kids off if they aren't adequately prepared for visiting relatives or mom and dad going out.

If possible, schedule some time to take each child shopping individually, having made lists in advance noting which gifts are for whom and which stores will be visited to obtain the gifts for others, not shop for oneself.

Choose the least busy times for shopping whenever possible and try to be organized about your shopping. Again making lists and avoiding impulse purchases. Don't take the children with you on your



Continued from page 13

INFANT

Given the variety of infant differences in cuddling the mother may not be primarily responsible for the connection between a mother's cuddling her infant and her infant's positive psychological response. And in the case of mothers with infants who seem not to enjoy cuddling, it seems likely that those mothers simply learn to cuddle their infants less. As a consequence, we have picked the wrong source for the initial unraveling of the positive physically affectionate threads woven between a mother and her infant.

Because we have no yardstick to measure the potential for cuddling in young infants, we cannot evaluate whether an infant is likely to be more or less easy or difficult to cuddle. Nor does the study of twin infants suggest that parents give up their natural urges to cuddle their infants. As several currently popular bumper stickers imply, hugging—that is, cuddling—seems to support children psychologically. Therefore, if a parent feels like cuddling an infant, the odds are that the infant is likely to enjoy that cuddling, at least to some degree, and to profit from it in the long run.

Nevertheless, if cuddling just doesn't seem to suit their infant, parents should not assume that it is somehow their fault. It is quite possible that the infant is simply less comfortable with a cuddling form of demonstrating love. ♥

shopping expeditions unless it is absolutely essential. It is unrealistic to expect them to be on their best behavior at this time of the year, and you will have a low level of tolerance for even normal childish behavior.

Get children involved. Involve them in some of the holiday activities at which they can be successful; and allow enough time for them to proceed at their own pace. For example, making cookies together is great; preparing for a dinner party with its stress is not appropriate.

If relatives are coming to stay, make sure the children know in advance if they are going to be uprooted from their rooms,

etc. Also, make sure grandparents know the house rules—not that they will necessarily follow them—but at least you can try to help them understand the effect of lack of discipline, or too much discipline from someone other than a parent, on the children's behavior.

Relax a little. Keep in mind that it is a holiday and that the unexpected will happen. That's OK, because what you are after is a happy, memorable family time and if a few naps get missed, or a few tears are shed by irritable children, it isn't the end of the world. ♥

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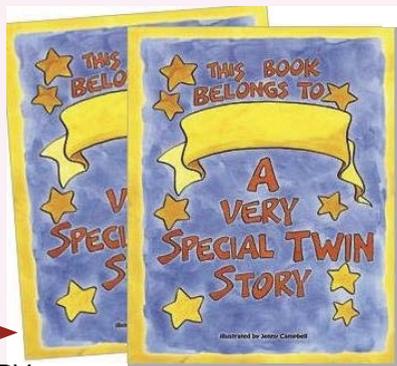
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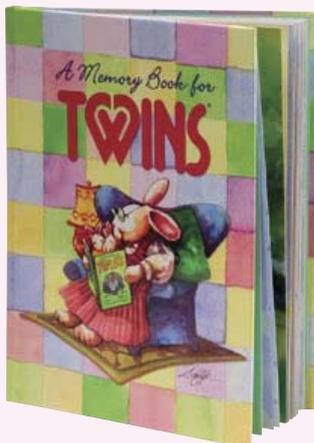
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See the Lights

by Trina Lambert



I recall Christmas when I was a child. It was magical. Time stood still as we prepared for celebrations at school and church, get-togethers with our families, the birth of baby Jesus, and of course, Santa's arrival! How do you keep the joy and tradition throughout the Christmas season?

Multiples can overload a busy season, but a few changes in expectations and activities can help create magical memories for everyone. My husband and I have cut out activities that don't add to our holiday joy and we don't pack away our Christmas spirit on December 26, even if the world screams "Christmas is gone; pack it away until next year!"

SET YOUR FAMILY'S PRIORITIES

A sermon reminded us to take care of ourselves and the people we love during the holidays. Instead of writing Christmas cards

one afternoon last year, we took a nap when our babies did. Now we send our annual family letter any month but December. Friends may think we're strange, but they also tell us they like having time to read our letter.

PROTECT YOUR KIDS FROM EXHAUSTION

One year we hosted Christmas Day at our house. The kids napped before the extended family arrived and after they left. With our toddlers celebrating Christmas on their own terms, we experienced peace and goodwill that day. Now that our children are older, they thrive on the crazy hubbub of cousins together at Grandma's house. Best of all, Grandma gets to prepare for guests, allowing us to relax before the big day.



LIMIT THE NUMBER OF GIFTS

By drawing names for gift-giving, our extended family members buy fewer presents. Opening fewer presents at our large Christmas gathering means we can spend more time talking and playing. And we watch each person open every package—no more free-for-all with wrapping paper flying.

CONVEY YOUR BELIEFS TO YOUR CHILDREN

Beginning around Thanksgiving, we read Bible stories from an advent calendar to prepare us for the December 25 celebration of the birth of Jesus. Instead of reading bedtime stories, our family sings Christmas carols from a hymnal. Our children now understand the true meaning of Christmas.

GIVE TO OTHERS

When we share with others, we focus on the joy of giving. Last year our kids contributed to their school food drive. They also offered part of their allowance to help buy new toys for a charity.

ALLOW PEOPLE TO GIVE TO YOU

One joy of our kids' first Christmas was sharing them with relatives one afternoon while we gladly accepted the chance to nap. That same year we noticed a sad-looking man staring at us while

we ate lunch in a fast food restaurant. He finally shuffled over to us, handed us a folded-up \$20.00 bill and confided that he had lost his son and daughter years ago. In their memory, he wanted our children to have something. That man needed us to accept his generosity. I think of him at Christmas and thank God for our children.

KEEP DECORATIONS SIMPLE

Martha Stewart doesn't live with children or a spouse, and she has paid assistants. You, however, are blessed with the bustle of a family. Put away your treasured glass ornaments and watch the wonder on your children's faces as they see the season's lights. Down the road you can "do" Christmas.

We use an artificial tree and keep bells on the lower branches so we know when kids or dogs pay too much attention to the tree. The tree stands in our house well into January since we choose to celebrate for a longer time.

KEEP THE MAGIC

If you discover your sense of December magic fading, slip the children into their pajamas and take a drive around the neighborhood to see the holiday lights. The little ones may fall asleep and for a moment, peace on earth will reign once more. ♥

Trina Lambert lives in Englewood, Colorado and is the mother of 8-year-old twins

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“We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same.”

—Anne Frank

It's time for **‘Mom’** this Holiday Season

KEEP IT SIMPLE

You undoubtedly have holiday traditions that you want to bring into your children's lives. How do you manage multiples and orchestrate a gourmet extravaganza for your friends and relatives? You don't. The best thing you can do for yourself and your family is to keep things on the light side. Reduce holiday menus to easy appetizers, the main course and dessert. Cut down on the number of side dishes and focus on recipes you can make ahead of time. While store-brought might not taste

as good as homemade, not everything has to be prepared from scratch or Nana's original recipe. You might even suggest that you will do the entire main dish and ask the guests to bring the side dishes. Take a little extra time for yourself rather than filing pre-celebration days with endless hours in the kitchen. Your family will be pleasantly surprised with some new traditions, and you will get to enjoy the holidays, too!

SHIRT WITH A PURPOSE

How many times have you arrived at the office looking like a carpool casualty? Here's an inventive solution: Wear one of your husband's old dress shirts over your business attire. That way when you hoist the kids in and out of the car your good clothing won't bear the brunt of spit-up and sticky finger stains.



MEMORY OVERLOAD

Recent research shows that emotional stress and memory loss are linked, says Robert M. Sapolsky, Ph.D., a Stanford University professor of biological sciences. When people are under stress or their days are filled with "things to do," memory gets hazy or takes a leave of absence altogether. Here are a few techniques to help you:

- Step back. You go to another room to get something, but forget what it was when you get there. Retrace your steps to where you had the thought of getting the item. Take a deep breath, close your eyes and it will usually come back to you.
- Make a list. Writing it down and saying the words while you write enhance retention.
- Talk to yourself. "I'm turning off the oven. Say the words as you complete the action.
- Devise shortcuts. If you have three errands to run, think of b-c-d to remember bank, cleaners and dentist.

Managing stress helps maintain mental sharpness and general well-being that contributes to the quality of life.

HOLIDAY REMINDER

During the holiday season, you will most likely find yourself at a party or event where alcohol is served. La Leche League International discourages alcohol consumption if you are breastfeeding. However, if you choose to take a drink be aware of the following facts:

- Alcohol is passed directly from the mother to the nursing child through breast milk.
- It takes two to three hours for one serving of beer or wine to pass out of your system.
- It takes 13 hours for a drink with higher alcohol content to pass out of your system.

Choose wisely, have fun and enjoy the festivities.



White Christmas

by Christine Bloomer

Ruth breathed in the aromatic scent of pine and revelled in the madness that is a mall at Christmastime. She enjoyed the hustle and bustle of shoppers, all on quests for Yuletide treasures to share with loved ones. She was enjoying herself so immensely that she didn't mind the hour she had to spend standing in line with her 6-year-old identical twin girls waiting to see Santa Claus.

"Mama, how much longer?" Samantha and Amanda whined. "It won't be much longer now," she assured them with a smile.

Finally it was their turn. Samantha marched right up to Santa. Ruth smiled as her daughter excitedly recited a memorized list.

Next it was Amanda's turn. She smiled up at Santa as he reached out his arms to her. Then Ruth's smile faded when she heard Amanda's single request.

"Santa, I don't want any toys or presents. All I want for Christmas is not to be a twin anymore."

On the way home from the mall, soft snow began to fall. Samantha chattered in excitement, but Amanda seemed far away. Once they reached home, Ruth sent Samantha inside. She put her arm around Amanda and said, "Let's go for a walk."

They walked together in silence alongside a small stream. After a few moments, Ruth spoke. "Why did you ask Santa to make it so you aren't a twin anymore?" she asked.

Amanda looked up at her with tears in her big brown eyes. "It's hard, Mama. Everyone mixes us up and I never feel special. Sometimes other kids in class just call me 'Twin' and they don't care that I have my own name."

Ruth mulled this over as they walked along. Finally, she reached out and pointed at the falling snow. "Look at the snowflakes, sweetie. No two snowflakes are alike. They all may look alike, but each is special in its own way and they all need each other. Individually, snowflakes just flutter away into the air, but together the snowflakes just flutter away into the air, but together the snowflakes make a winter wonderland."

She paused, and taking Amanda's hands knelt down before her. "No two people are alike. Even though you and your sister look identical, you each have your own special qualities. You are also a team and just like the snowflakes, you need each other. You and your sister are both very special and I don't want you to ever feel that you are not."

Amanda contemplated this a moment. Finally, she threw her arms around Ruth. "I love you, Mama. You always make me feel better."

Ruth couldn't help smiling and mother and daughter walked arm in arm toward the warmth of home. It was going to be a great Christmas, after all.





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PREGNANCY

INFANTS

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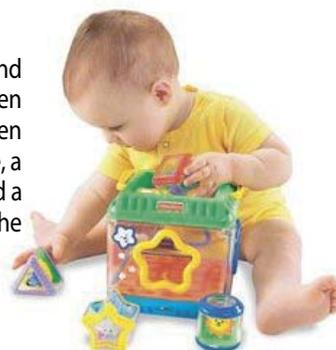
Encouraging learning and discovery, the Lamaze foot finder set is covered in the friendly faces of garden bugs. Suitable from birth, these wrist and sock rattles feature vibrant stimulating colours and crinkle fabric. Split up this set of four rattles between your two babies, then sit back and watch the fun. Colorful patterned mitts slip on over babies' hands and feet; as the twin infants kick and move around, they make a rattling sound. Enhances developmental skills in infants over three months.

<http://www.learningcurve.com/product/detail/LC27111>

Fisher-Price Peek-a-Blocks: Shape Sorter

The Peek-a-Blocks Shape Sorter introduces shaped blocks to Baby while entertaining and stimulating visual and tactile senses. Baby is rewarded with fun sound effects and music when they sort any of the four shapes, or if they just drop the shapes through the generous open top of the cube. The four shapes include a star with a star-shaped pinwheel that spins inside, a circle with a round sun that spins, a square with small blocks that rattle and shake inside and a triangle with a triangular-shaped piece of cheese. A little mouse pops out as baby shakes the block - surprise! There's also a handle, so baby can take it on the road.

<http://www.fisher-price.com/fp.aspx?st=132340&e=thumb&pcat=BUPEEK>

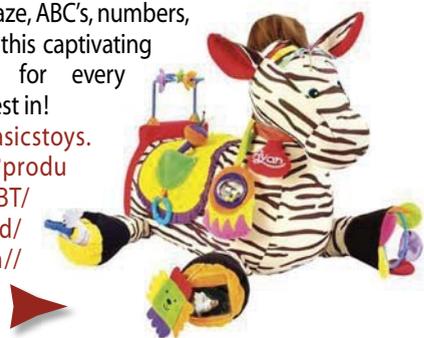


TODDLERS

Activity Zebra

Adorable Zebra Keeps Little Ones Active & Learning! What's striped and white and fun all over? This cuddly Activity Zebra addresses the simulative and developmental needs of infants to preschoolers. The award-winning learning toy builds, stimulates, and enhances cognitive and motor skills. Featuring 28 activities — including a removable rattle, teether, mirror, bead maze, ABC's, numbers, and so much more — this captivating toy has something for every youngster to find interest in!

<http://www.backtobasicstoys.com/ShowItem.aspx?productID=7753&psch=BTBT/ps/20101001/google/pd/txtl/Learning%20Fun//For%20Baby>



Elmo Tickle Hands

Put the big furry Elmo Tickle Hands gloves onto your toddlers and watch them giggle and dance to the music. Vibrations and playful phrases in Elmo's own voice will be activated whenever the gloves touch any surface, and press the button on the gloves (Elmo's nose) to hear Elmo sing some great songs. The Elmo Tickle Hands toy also comes with an instructional DVD that shows children how to do the dances.

<http://www.ticklehands.com/>



Step 2 Versa Seat Wagon with Canopy

This is a sturdy wagon with removable seats and great for any activity; the unique wagon seats lift out for immediate seating for 2 anywhere (perfect for parents with toddler twins!) High back seats provide more support for a comfortable ride. Canopy on each side protects kids from the sun and rain.

http://www.step2.com/product.cfm?product_id=1789

Winther Viking Twin Taxi WIN468

The Twin Taxi stimulates the imagination – the possibilities are endless. It allows three children to play together at the same time and promotes role-play. There is even a trailer you can purchase to pull behind for even more fun.

<http://www.brandsplace.com/0132-win468.html>





PRE-SCHOOLERS



Little Tikes Double Easel

Just like any great artist, your little one should be prepared for that moment when creative inspiration arrives. Featuring a large chalkboard on one side and a blank pad of paper on the other, this Double Easel will ensure that your pintsize Van Gogh can capture a moment of inspiration before it passes. The Double Easel is made of durable plastic and comes with wide trays on both sides for storing art supplies (not included), as well as a large piece of chalk and an eraser (included). A large plastic clamp on one side of the easel holds down a 50-sheet pad of paper (included), and the two storage trays are removable for easy cleanup. Designed for use by one or two children at a time, the Double Easel folds together for compact storage. Measures 43.5 inches tall.

<http://www.littletikes.com/toys/double-easel.aspx>

Tegu Natural Magnetic Wooden Blocks Original Set -

This Original Set provides play for hours. The Original Set includes 52 blocks in four shapes: 20 Cubes, 16 Long Planks, 10 Short Planks, and 6 Jumbo Planks. The blocks come in a natural finish. Magnetic connections between the blocks make for novel play that defies gravity and increases a child's creative freedom. These blocks are made of a beautiful blonde hardwood native to Honduras. We're proud to be using it. Tegu is a pioneering wooden toy company designing products that unleash the power of little imaginations. Introducing eco-friendly building blocks magically attracted by magnets, Tegu has unveiled the first wooden toys ever created to defy gravity. But, it gets better: building their own manufacturing plant in Honduras, Tegu is realizing a dual goal of creating dozens of jobs for men and women while working to replenish a sadly abused rainforest. Ages 3+ | Warning: This product contains small magnets. Swallowed magnets can cause complications leading to serious infections and death. Seek immediate medical attention if magnets are swallowed or inhaled.

http://live.tegu.com/home?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_term=tegu%20wooden%20blocks&utm_campaign=GST_TEGU_1110_008_Brand&mkwid=sOB3H8D0A&pcrid=6423733386



Calico Critters Furbanks Squirrel Twins

by Calico Critters

Meet the citizens of Cloverleaf Corners! Adorable Critters come with removable clothing. Twins have heads that turn, and are 1 1/4" tall. The Furbanks Twins are cute squirrels that go with the Furbanks Squirrel Family. Baby Ray and Sister Fay have fun playing with all the acting make-up and face paints. If someone isn't watching them, they will cover themselves from head to toe with bright colors. There are also Twin Panda Bears, Twin Elephants and more!

Adorable Critters come with removable clothing. Family Critters are pose able, with jointed arms and legs, and heads that turn! The Furbanks family enjoys acting and directing. Mother Emma is always rehearsing her lines, while Father Kenneth is known for directing with a big booming voice and dramatic gestures. Brother Douglas is in his own imaginary world of pirates, knights and dragons. His sister Greta is the exact opposite of him-she is quite and a perfectionist, especially with her acting.

<http://www.wonderbrains.com/furbanks-squirrel-twins.html>





Crazy Forts

Children of all ages love building fun structures where they can play endlessly in their imaginary worlds. And Crazy Forts makes play so easy and so fun. Simply connect the balls and sticks and cover the structure with bed sheets to create places where imaginations flourish. Durable, portable and best of all, there's no batteries required! You can build your own creation, a playhouse for parties, tunnels or connect with friends for spectacular structures. Compatible with Crazy Forts Fort Lights for added fun!

<http://crazyforts.com/>

Electronic Toy Medical Cart

Say Ahhhh...This durable plastic Doctor's Cart toy is loaded with terrific role-play accessories. Find pretend heart monitor, stethoscope, medicines, and more. Light and sound sensors offer a realistic touch. To really get into the role, add our Doctor Outfit (Items #7017, 7028, 7039 in S/M/L), sold separately. Definitely a prescription for fun!

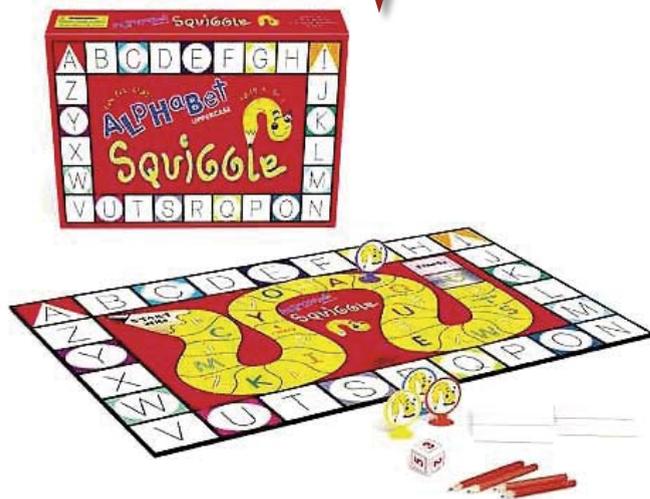
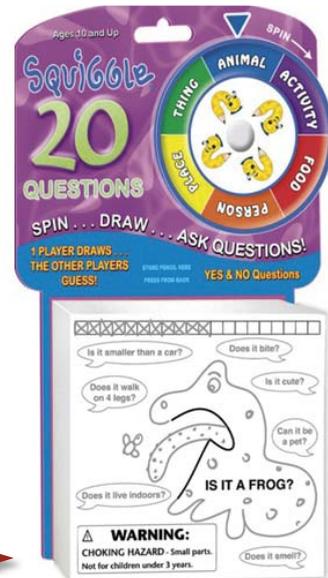
http://www.backtobasicstoy.com/item/productid/8163/txt/Electronic_Toy_Medical_Cart



SCHOOL-AGE Alphabet SQUIGGLE® Game

Alphabet SQUIGGLE game is a unique, educational board game that introduces letters to children in a fun and creative way. Kids will learn and improve letter recognition and handwriting while strengthening their vocabulary and building self esteem. Children who are just learning letters to those who already know them will enjoy playing this fun and engaging game. Watch how surprised they get when they see how much they can do with letters! To Play: Players move along the pencil path of letters. For every letter a player lands on, that player must find the letter on the outside edge of the board and either trace it or write it from memory on the sketch paper provided. If they're feeling creative, they can turn their letter tracing into a picture, write a word that begins with that letter, or create a drawing that begins with and reinforces that letter to move extra spaces. It's simple, fun and engaging.

<http://www.areyougame.com/interact/item.asp?itemno=RL00002>

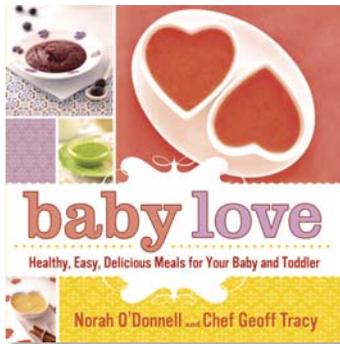


Squiggle 20 Questions Game

SQUIGGLE® 20 Questions is a guessing good time! It's entertaining and thought-provoking for kids and adults alike. One player spins the wheel and turns the squiggly line into something in that category without the other players seeing. When ready, the other players get to ask up to 20 questions before they give their best guess of what was drawn. The player who guesses correctly gets to draw next! Intended for two or more players ages 10 and up

<http://randomline.com/SQUIGGLE20Questions.aspx>

Great Gift Ideas For Moms, Too!



Baby love, Healthy, Easy, Delicious Meals for Your Baby & Toddler

This is a fabulous cookbook written by celebrity parents of twins Norah O'Donnell and Chef Geoff Tracy. There are so many great recipes and tips for you to easily make your own delicious and healthy baby food—no more jars!

<http://www.babylovefoods.com/about-the-book/>



14K Sterling Silver Large Mother and Child® Pendant for Twins with Genuine Birthstones

Personalize your Mother and Child® with your twin's birthstones By Janel Russell. These gorgeous pendants are available in many styles, depending on what you like and is a perfect gift for any mother of twins in your life!

<http://www.janelrussell.com/twins.html>



A Sanity Saver—a Gift Subscription to TWINS Magazine

For the past 27 years, TWINS Magazine has been the world-leading parenting resource for twins, triplets & higher-order multiples. What better way to give someone a sanity saver than to give the gift of TWINS Magazine for a year and give them the information they can't get any place else!

www.twinsmagazine.com

Other Great Parenting Products We Love...



Introducing Hold-On Handles from Greater Than One Kids

As toddlers start wanting freedom from strollers, more than ever moms need an extra set of hands. Introducing patent-pending Hold-On Handles, the first stroller accessory and walking rope for one to three walking children ages 18 months and older. With a quick click of the unique, oversized carabiner it can transform from stroller accessory to a reinvented walking rope that can be worn comfortably on a parent's wrist or through a belt loop. Children befriend the fun, whimsical handles, freeing up mom or dad's hands to push the stroller, hold the bags, or open doors. And, parents can teach their children to stay "in line" without

restraining them with embarrassing leashes or harnesses. Hold-On Handles are sold in sets for up to three children, in two whimsical designs—Bizzy Bugs and Ocean Odyssey. Additional spare handles are sold separately. Parents can visit www.greaterthanonekids.com for more information on this novel parenting tool.

Greater Than One Kids design mom, baby, and kids products for growing families with greater than one child. Company founders, Susanne Budofsky and Robyn Spritzer, experience first-hand the challenges parents of greater than one face each and every day. Susanne has 7 year-old triplets and Robyn has a 6 year-old daughter and twin 2 year-olds. That's why they feel compelled to create products that make everyday tasks safer, easier, and a little more enjoyable for everyone.





True Womb Infant Sleep System

This is a great new product and the only swaddle on the market that controls the startle reflex in both the arms and legs of your infants. TrueWomb replicates the feeling of mother's womb, making a baby's transition to the real world happier for everyone! Their legs and hips can stretch and flex while their patent-pending SwaddleTech™ system comfortably eases them back in to the fetal position that they are accustomed to. The product mimics the comforting form and function of the womb. The SecureSleeve™ escape-proof arm pockets allow movement of the arms and the ComfortWrap™ belt adjusts for growth and provides a gentle, snug fit. There is a two-stage swaddle system which supports evolving needs as your babies develop and grow. It's lightweight, breathable, and is made of four-way stretch cotton fabric which helps to prevent overheating. Learn more about this great new sleep system by visiting www.truewomb.com

San Diego BeBe Twin Eco Nursing Pillow

Deluxe Privacy Pillow when nursing twins with a built-in Privacy Cover, providing complete discretion during nursing. The cover's lightweight mesh construction provides continuous airflow, keeping mom and babies comfortable. San Diego Bebe's signature Comfort Bolster wraps around the outside of the pillow for added security. Like the EZ-2-Nurse Twins pillow before it, San Diego Bebe has an angled top surface and detachable back pillow for optimal support and comfort. It is available in a variety of chic new colors and plush new fabrics. Visit www.sandiegobebe.com to learn more.



Bottle Snugglers — Feeding Time Helper!



This Charming Teddy Bear is a classic childhood symbol, and every baby should have one as snuggly as this. It is soft brown velour with cream foot pads and a plaid bow, which is suitable for a boy or girl. This soft, huggable Bottle Snugglers™ Charming Teddy Bear will support most baby bottle types and will become a favorite baby toy in your home after baby learns to hold the bottle alone. The Charming Teddy Bear is the bottle holder that started it all for Bottle Snugglers. This model gave such great help during feeding time for one Florida baby, that his parents actually bought the company! They also have other adorable snugglers like the Cuddly Cow, Pinky Pig and the Precious Puppy, too. Visit www.bottlesnugglers.com to learn more.

The Swaddle Keeper

The Swaddle Keeper was developed by a labor & delivery, postpartum and newborn nurse and is a swaddling blanket—a sleep system with proven design and a video filled with educational instruction to help parents and babies get more sleep! It has Natural cotton, padded head support making the newborn easier to hold and pass from person to person. The head support is great for siblings, grandparents and new parents to feel confident when holding the newest member of their family. The V-shaped leg opening allows newborns legs to extend and stretch for proper hip and leg development. The fact that the legs are unrestrained by the SwaddleKeeper and gently covered by a receiving blanket makes diaper checks possible without un-swaddling. One size fits newborns weighing 5-22 pounds or 6-8 months. Most newborns like being swaddled for closer to 3 months, but there are a number of babies that sleep better when swaddled longer even up to 8 months. Every baby is different and the SwaddleKeeper will continue to work for larger babies.



Visit www.swaddlekeeper.com

Looking for something fun to do with your twins this holiday season?

Throw a **COOKIE** Party

We're having a party
and you're invited!

Sarah & Rachel

Invite you to their

**Holiday
Cookie Party**

Saturday, December 14, 2010

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

RSVP - 555-9566

Please bring your mom,
sugar and red sprinkles!

The only thing more fun than eating cookies is baking and decorating them. Select an easy recipe such as Cut-Out Cookies from the *Six Ingredients or Less* cookbook by Carlean Johnson. The hostess provides the kitchen, and each little guest brings an essential ingredient and a decorative item such as red, green or chocolate sprinkles as requested on the invitation. Split up the items; split the expense. Moms guide the little hands as they measure, mix, roll and cut the dough into festive holiday shapes. Decorate and divide the cookies—some to eat now, some for the guests to take home. Don't forget to bring a cookie tin to take away your fair share. Your little elves will love an afternoon baking with mom, and you'll have precious works of art to add to your selection of holiday treats.

**Try a Twin Twist on a
Holiday Favorite!**

Twin Gingerbread Men

Try a 'twin' twist on this holiday favorite... make twin gingerbread men. They are simply two small gingerbread men joined at the hands and feet to form one cookie and be sure to let your twins help! Don't be surprised if you get 'twice the mess' but it's a lot of fun and something new to add to your families favorite sweet treats!

Cut-Out Cookies

2 cups of butter, softened (do not substitute)
 2 cups of sugar
 4 eggs
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 1 teaspoon salt
 6 cups flour

In a mixer bowl, cream butter until smooth. Gradually add sugar, mixing well after each addition. Beat until light and fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla and mix well. Combine salt and flour. Add to creamed mixture, a little at a time and mix well. Cover and chill for at least 6 hours.

On a lightly floured surface, using a small amount of dough at a time, roll out to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters. Place dough on ungreased cookie sheets and bake at 375 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes or until just beginning to brown around the edges. Makes about 6 dozen cookies, depending on the size of the cookie cutters

Quick Chill—line a pan with wax paper or foil. Place dough on pan and pat into 1 inch thickness. Place in freezer for 30 minutes.



Easy Sugar Cookies

½ cup butter or margarine
 ½ cup sugar (plus some to sprinkle on top)
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 egg yolk (reserve white)
 1 cup flour

1. Combine ingredients in mixer bowl until blended
2. Shape into small balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet
3. Beat egg white slightly with fork
4. Dip fork in egg white and lightly press cookie
5. Sprinkle with additional sugar
6. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes

They should not brown but should be light in color. Makes 2 ½ dozen cookies. Double or triple the recipe as desired.

These recipes have been reprinted by permission from the author of Six Ingredients of Less by Carlean Johnson. Carlean Johnson is the author of a series of cookbooks and has a twin brother!

Other FUN Things

to do this holiday season with
your multiples:

Wrap it up!

This year, why not let your multiples decorate the holiday wrapping paper, gift bags, and note & place cards. They can put together one-of-a-kind creations that cost less than traditional holiday paper supplies.

Here's what you'll need:

- Plain paper
- Gift bags
- Card stock
- Pre-cut sponges
- Paint
- Ribbon

Here's how...

For gift wrap, spread out a roll of plain paper on a hard, flat surface. Then let your multiples dip pre-cut sponges in paint and make their own special patterns on the paper products. They can decorate gift bags, note and place cards and tins that hold home-made sweet treats. If your multiples write, they can even help you personalize the cards.

Make personalized picture frames with your pair

Decorating glass clip frames and personalizing them for your loved ones make meaningful and inexpensive gifts. Depending on the supplies you choose to use, you can keep the cost for each frame around \$10.00.

Here's what you'll need:

- Frames (depending on size you can find some frames between \$2 and \$5)
- Acrylic paint
- Paint brush

Optional items:

- Pre-cut sponges
- Photo mat
- Paper
- Puzzle (use old puzzles with missing pieces)
- Permanent marker

Here's how...

Choose plain or patterned paper to paste to the board behind the glass. Then glue a favorite photo of your multiples on the paper background. You don't have to center it, attach it anyway you like: at an angle or off-centered. Clip the glass to the board and you're ready to paint. Decorate it any way you want. Paint it freehand or use paint sponges—the sky's the limit! If you'd like to make the puzzle frame, just hot glue old puzzle pieces to the glass, and shape them into a frame around the picture.





Let Your Kids Be the Artist – Instead of uploading a favorite photo for holiday cards, simply scan your kids' favorite drawings and quickly upload to a photo greeting card site. This is an especially cute idea for classroom or grandparent holiday cards.

Collage Card – Instead of spending hours deciding which photo to feature for the holiday card, just choose several photos taken throughout the year



Easy Ideas for Creating Custom, Memorable Holiday Cards

Even with the popularity of using e-mail, social media, and texting to communicate with friends and family, holiday cards continue to be a time-honored tradition. In fact, according to a survey from holiday cards and thank you cards retailer Cardstore.com, 43 percent of Americans prefer a greeting card from a loved one instead of \$10, and 63 percent think sending a special occasion greeting through a social network is inappropriate.

While survey results show most people prefer to receive holiday cards, people mistakenly think that creating these custom cards is time consuming. Thanks to technology, new products, and online greeting card sites, this isn't necessarily the case. By following the tips below, creating custom, personalized holiday cards can be easy, fun, and inexpensive.

Picture Perfect – Getting a perfect holiday picture does not have to involve a three-hour photo shoot with an expensive photographer. Oftentimes the best holiday shots are the candid, everyday ones shot at home. For professional-looking DIY images, use natural light (if indoors, shoot near a window), get up close, and have the subjects involved in a favorite activity. Laugh, have fun, and shoot away. Even if the shots aren't perfect, use photo editing software – sometimes just simply changing the image to black and white or cropping out unwanted parts can transform the image.



that highlight favorite adventures and memories. Visit a favorite online card store and select one of the many templates available.

Keep It Simple – Scour the crafting and dollar stores where there are a variety of inexpensive products to make handmade cards. Use blank cards and embellish with just one or two items – any more items and it can be daunting, especially if more than 50 cards need to be made. For instance, punch out polka dots in festive holiday papers using a circle punch and adhere them to the card front in a random, whimsical pattern. Or, run a piece of grosgrain ribbon across the front of card and adhere a glittered embellishment or button.

Use a Kit – For those who lack the creative bug or are really strapped for time, use pre-assembled DIY holiday card kits. Cardstore.com has embellished card kits that combine the time-saving elements of digital photo cards with the personal, hand-crafted touch of dimensional accents. Order the photo cards online. Once they arrive, decorate the cards with the provided coordinating stamps, gems, and glitter glue. Tips and creative inspiration included and no extra trip to the craft store needed!

Helpful holiday hints? *Move over* *Martha Stewart*



Bill McGee of Denver, Colorado, is a freelance writer and the father of twin girls.

by Bill McGee

You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout; get your feet out of the pie. This familiar verse—modified to the realities of the McGee household—has become my mantra as I approach another round of holidays with my wife Lisa and our 3 ½ year-old twins daughters, Katie and Sara. Fortunately, as each year goes by, there's less crying and pouting...but enough about Lisa and me.

Like most families, we've had our share of warm and wonderful holiday moments. However, I seem to best remember the ones that would never make a *Currier and Ives* print.

HALLOWEEN HAVOC

For instance, we were proud parents that Halloween when our 1-year-olds were finally able to walk on their tiny toddler legs up to neighbors' doors to Trick-or-Treat. However, Sara over did the personal mobility concept. For as soon as a neighbor opened the door, Sara barged right in and made herself at home—in the kitchen, dining room or wherever looked most inviting. It was then my mission to extricate her wriggling body from the family's dog or homemade caramel corn and explain. "Yes, honey, I know we just got here, but now we have to go."

Katie made her Halloween reputation as a home-front hostess. When costumed kiddies held out their sacks at our door, 2 ½ year old Katie took it as an invitation to plunder, reaching in to relieve

them of their best treats. It was a toss-up who threw the bigger tantrum—the kids whose candy was swiped or Kate when she had to give it back.

Lisa and I were no better. Last year when we all got back from trick-or-treating, we searched through the girls' treat bags and began recycling the least attractive items back to the doorbell ringers. Naively, we thought our twins eating dinner in the kitchen would be oblivious to the chicanery in the dining room. Suddenly there came an independent howl from Sara, "HEEEY, Mom's giving away our candy," Nothing like being caught red-licorice-handed.

SICK OF THE HOLIDAYS? NOT US!

At Thanksgiving, McGee family tradition usually involved one of us being in the emergency room or otherwise disabled. Lisa was on pregnancy bed rest the Thanksgiving before the twins were born, which, we like to feel, gave the kids a leg up on this quaint family custom.

Last year, Lisa's family joined us for Thanksgiving. Aunt Robbin contracted a killer flu bug as she was getting on the plane in Texas and was totally laid low by the time she arrived in Denver. Poor Robbin spent the entire five days down in our unfinished basement "guest room" and the twins only saw her from a safe distance at the top of the stairs. Weeks after everyone went home; Katie and Sara would ask if their Aunt Robbin was still down in the basement.

Expecting tales of tempting turkey dinners or Indian/Pilgrim vignettes, we asked the kids what they liked best about Thanksgiving. Kate said she liked it when Dad dropped the jar of honey, and Sara picked when the garbage disposal blew up.

Obviously our daughters think it is a fine Thanksgiving custom to confine guests in accommodations we usually reserve for our cat, to dodge food particles, spewing out of the sink, and to reverently gather around a mess of glass embedded in honey on the kitchen floor.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Christmas, of course, is also special. Amidst the snowflakes and silver bells, Lisa



Continued from page 11

PREGNANCY

you explain it on a kindergarten form. Both Cyndi and Maria can expect to spend the rest of their lives correcting other people's attempts at pronouncing and spelling their names.

There are many considerations when choosing names for your multiples. Some are more important than others, but more parents will agree that the following hint offered by Bill Cosby in his book, *Fatherhood*, is one to pay attention to: "Always end the name of your child with a vowel, so that when you yell, the name will carry..." ♥

and I always look forward to the "Annual Christmas Tree Fight."

Besides the timing of putting up the tree, we wrangle over which way it should face, how it should be anchored, what the trimming should be, and where and when it will fall over.

While my wife and I were arguing last Christmas, Sara said, "You guys stop fighting."

"We're not fighting, I protested, "We're discussing."

"Well, you shouldn't be disgusting at Christmas," Sara replied. Can't argue with that.

Last year, we put up a novelty Santa, who boomed "Ho, ho, ho—Merry Christmas" every time the door was opened; besides fielding the toddler question, "Dad, who's Mary Christmas?" seemingly hundreds of times, I began to find Santa's unceasing jolliness just a bit tiresome.

By the third day, Santa had mysteriously disappeared. My guess is that he was bound and gagged by some cheerless Grinch and hidden in an upstairs closet.

But, at least we had the spiritual consolation of Christmas Eve services in our church. We thought the kids were old enough to sit in the sanctuary with us, until, at one of the most solemn, silent moments, Katie sang out loud and clear, "Mom, I've got to go potty!"

Granted, it wasn't "God bless us, everyone," but just about what we've come to expect from our little dickens. ♥

On Sale Now!

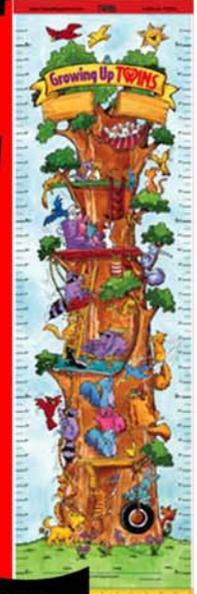
Growing Up Twins Growth Chart

Because they grow up so fast... & you want to capture EVERY moment!

A TWIN Shoppe Exclusive!

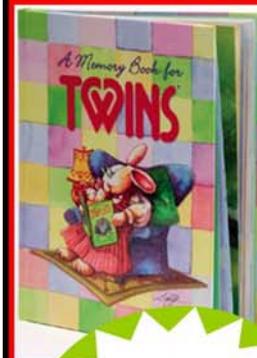
On sale for only \$15.95*

*Prices do not include Shipping & Processing and those charges will be added at checkout



Also on sale now...

TWINS Lifetime Memory Book



This is another TWIN Shoppe Exclusive & was designed just for twins! Each beautifully illustrated hard-bound Lifetime Memory Book has information to include on both babies! Buy 2 and give them a keepsake for BOTH your twins that will last a lifetime!

Now Only \$8.95*

Order online: www.TwinsMagazine.com



Open Season on Sitters

Cornering
the market
on holiday
sitters

by Nancy A. Moeller

The holiday season means parties, gifts, decorations and constant fun for children, but for the parents who have to provide all those activities, it means squeezing even more into an already packed schedule. Most families have to hire more baby sitters during this time of year, not only for parties, but to get everything done. Since sitters and money are in high demand between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, parents of multiples have to be creative in using their time and their caregivers during the holidays.

PARTY TIME!

Saturdays in December are premium nights for holiday parties, so sitters need to be lined up early. "I line up my sitters the minute I know the date and give them a reminder call a week ahead of time," says Lisa Cranwell-Bruce of Atlanta, mother of four children



including 3-year-old twins. It's a good idea to have a back-up plan in case a sitter cancels.

While you're searching for holiday sitters, don't forget New Year's Eve. You may not be thinking about 2011 during Thanksgiving or early December, but the other families competing for your baby sitters are. By the first day of December, most regular sitters have a job for that busy last night of the year.

HOURS OF SHOPPING TO DO

Baby-sitting isn't just for parents' nights out, but for shopping as well. Sara Adler of Boca Raton, Florida, uses a "mother's morning out" program to care for her twins, Emily and Alexander, while she does last minute Hanukkah shopping or food preparation. "You feel like it's: On your mark! Get set! Go! Let's see how much I can

get done in three hours," laughs Sara. Even if the hours are short, these programs usually provide activities and fun for children while mom or dad checks a few things off the gift list.

Kay Allison, of Barrington, Illinois, has been fortunate enough to have family members come and care for her 3 ½ year old twin girls, Kate and Lucy. Still, Kay found that to get all her shopping done, she had to get child-care help. "I think with the multiples you really need someone older than 21 when they are younger," Kay advises. For that reason, Kay hires sitters whose regular job involves working with preschoolers.

SEASON FOR SLEEPOVERS

If you are fortunate enough to have family living nearby, you should consider having the kids spend the night away from home, either separately or together. One of the advantages of having children spend the night away is that parents can get several things done at once. The parents might use the opportunity to go out in the evening, then get up and get some shopping done the next day. Without the kids at home, parents don't have to leave the presents in the car until bedtime, risking accidental discovery.

ENDLESS WRAPPING

Even after you have finished shopping and partying, there are still plenty of activities around the house that must be done. How is it possible to assemble the latest complicated toy with the threat of children waking in each time you lift the hammer? Sometimes it's best to have the house to yourself, even if it's just to complete the holiday baking without having to stop and fix a peanut butter sandwich.

If family isn't available and funds are running low, a reciprocal agreement with another family may be your best choice: We'll take yours if you'll take ours. This works best close to the actual holiday so that everything is home from the stores and ready to wrap.

RECRUIT HELP FROM FAMILY OR NEIGHBORS

One problem for large families is that use of extended family members as baby sitters might not be possible. It's not easy to handle so many children alone. As an inexpensive solution for this problem, families might try hiring a mature preteen to help the grandparents care for the children.

If the youngster hasn't started baby-sitting by herself yet, she'll get a lot of experience while being supervised by an adult, and she won't charge nearly what a teenager with a driver's license might. The grandparents will be spared some of the more physical aspects of caring for your children—lifting into cribs and high chairs, for example.

These same preteens can be excellent help for you while you're trying to accomplish those last minute items at home. There may be a mom in your neighborhood who would love to send her 10 and 12-year-olds over to your house. That way the mother will get some time alone, while her kids will entertain your multiples. In return, you get some free help and an opportunity to sneak off and wrap last-minute packages. ♥

Nancy A. Moeller of Atlanta, Georgia is a stay-at-home mom and freelance writer. She is a mother of triplet boys.

FINDING AND KEEPING SITTERS

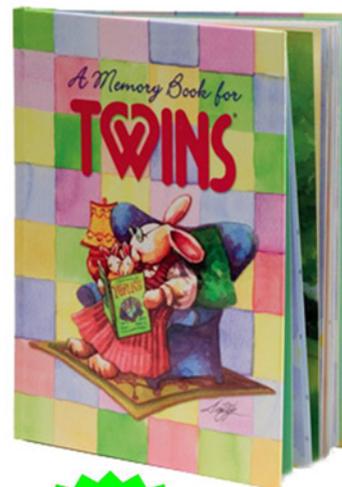
Parents of multiples face special challenges in getting baby sitters. Here are a few things you can do to make life easier for your sitters:

- Dress your children differently or put their names on their shirts.
- Introduce the twins to the baby sitter so she'll know who's who.
- Be objective about the job requiring more than one sitter. If any children are still in diapers, you may need to consider an extra set of hands.
- Two baby sitters don't necessarily mean two the same age. A teenage with a preteen sibling or a parent/child combination might work well and cost a little less.
- Most sitters will tell you that the hourly rate isn't what makes them take or decline a job when they're available---it's the work conditions. If the job always requires feeding the children or constantly entertaining them, they may be inclined to turn it down. Hire her for some nights when the children will spend much of the time asleep.

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Multiples Stress?

By Ann-Marie Nelson



Raising twins or other multiple-birth children is exhausting, fatiguing, physically and emotionally draining... But is it stressful?

Parents interviewed for this article admitted they sometimes feel overwhelming exhaustion, but denied that double or triple-duty roles cause stress. They may simply be too tired to recognize the symptoms. Or more likely, they quickly learn to adapt their behavior in order to cope with their multi-task assignment as parents of multiples.

Take Sandy and Jeff Thelen of Farmington, Minnesota, for example. Stressful situations are rare for the parents of 12-year-old Chard and 11-year-old twins Eric and Linda, according to Sandy. "The twins were always easy, in that they took their naps and went to bed without any problems," she said. They were born at 30 weeks, and the tiny infants' premature birth and accompanying medical problems—especially Eric, who had hydrocephalus—dominated their parents' lives and was anything but easy.

"They were in the hospital for two months, and Eric had nine surgeries in the first year or so. We learned to take things day by day and week by week," Sandy recalls. "I think it helped us learn to deal with the things as they grew up."

Like most parents of multiples, she found that putting the tiny pair and their year-old brother on a schedule and sticking to it was critical for family stability. "Naptime was a necessity. It gave me an hour and half to do things I needed to do."

As the three siblings grew, they grew into a routine of their own—afternoon crankiness. "It always seemed like they became crabby right when Jeff came home and they would cling to me, which was hard on both of us since Jeff was gone all day and he also

needed to bond with them." After spending a full day with three toddlers, Sandy needed time away from the children and household duties.

The solution was simple, "I would go somewhere once a week and that was Jeff's time with the kids." It was a special time for everyone—Dad alone with Chad, Eric and Linda, and Mom getting together with friends, shopping or bowling.

Establishing and maintaining a schedule is critical for parents of multiples, said Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D. a clinical psychologist in Santa Monica, California., a twin herself, she specializes in counseling twins and parents of twins.

STRESS: A constraining force or influence; a physical, chemical or emotional factor or event that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation.

5 Ways to Maintain Your Sanity

Dr. Pearlman offers this advice to Moms and Dads who are new to the world of multiples:

- 1. Get help and seek advice.** Twins organization, parent groups, family members and neighbors all can be a source of relief and information.
- 2. Prioritize.** Everything can't demand the same attention and time from you and if it's a choice between playing with your giggling twosome or scrubbing the floor, the floor can wait.
- 3. Develop a workable schedule and stick wit it.** Children are comforted by a consistent routine. It's important to their development and to your sanity.
- 4. Whether they are fraternal or identical, twins are individual beings.** Celebrate their unique bond, but encourage their independence. Try not dressing them alike when they are young, and allowing them to choose their attire (alike or different) when they are older.
- 5. Multiple birth siblings also need to spend time alone,** to discover who they are and build their self-confidence. When they're always together, and especially if they are dressed identically, people tend to see them as a unit rather than as individuals.

A consistent schedule gives parents time to enjoy their children, Dr. Pearlman explained. Often the parents of multiples are so busy they don't have time to experience the joy of their children, and years later, they regret it.

"It's really important to take time to sit back and just observe your children—watch how they play with each other and talk to each other," Pearlman said. Not only is this an opportunity to learn about your twins and how they interact, but it's also a chance to take pleasure in them, she added.

But how do busy parents find time to sit back and observe, without mutli-tasking by folding laundry or making up the grocery list and thus defeating the intent of "sitting back and observing?"

"Get help. As much as you can, however you can," Dr. Pearlman urged. If you can afford it, hire someone to come in for a few hours each day or week to help out with housework and chores that need to be done, she suggested. For many families, finances prohibit this—so joining or forming a playgroup or parents' cooperative gives Mom or Dad some free time on a regular basis.

One Arizona mother of twins has a neighbor who comes over for a few ours once a week, giving her time to "take a bath, or just read a book."

Parents can seek help or advice from other parents of multiples. "Talking with others who are dealing with the same things you are helps to normalize the situation," Dr. Pearlman said. "You begin to see that behaviors or situations that seem atypical to parents of singletons are perfectly routine when you're dealing with more than one child of the same age."

Prioritizing tasks according to what's really important can significantly reduce self-imposed stress. One mother of very active twin

toddler boys found herself constantly picking up toys, wiping down walls and cleaning house—in between diaper changes, feedings (with baby food made from scratch) and regularly recording her tots' progress in a journal.

"I tried to be Supermom," she said. "Instead, I was Grouchy Mom because I was so tired all the time." Today her house may be messy and the baby food comes in jars but "we're all much happier," she said..

Nancy and Glen Masterson, of Gilbert, Arizona, are parents of 5-year-old twins Emily and Austin. Nancy admitted that the first few years as a new mother at twins tested her endurance. She quit her teaching job to stay home with Emily and Austin. "The day I was manually pumping my breasts while driving my stick-shift car to work was when I realized I was trying to do too much," she recalled. Her firefighter husband worked extra shifts to maintain their income, but this meant that sometimes he worked four days straight—and when he came home, he went right to sleep.

At first, Nancy laughed, "I cried a lot." But eventually, she came up with a routine that helped. "I started the day by putting the kids in the stroller and taking them for a walk, and usually I'd run into other Moms and we'd talk. I would end the day the same way." She also planned at least one outing a day, even if it was just a short trip to the supermarket. To minimize potential problems, she always made sure the twins were fed and their diapers changed before she left the house.

Now that the Mastersons' children are older, "I really don't feel stress," Nancy said. Frustration? Yes—like the first day of kindergarten this year, when Austin put his blanket over his head and proclaimed that he wasn't going. "I'm afraid I won't be able to find my sister," he announced. Nancy teaches kindergarten herself but at a different school, so it was Daddy who walked the twins to school and allayed Austin's concerns about losing Emily.

Separation anxiety can be a problem for any youngster, but the potential increases when twins have never spent time alone or away from their sibling, according to Dr. Pearlman—and that can be stressful for the parents. She encourages parents of twins to provide opportunities for each child to be alone, independent of his or her mate. "Its' important for them to learn who they are as individuals," she said.

The parents of Emily and Drew Rutter in Tucson, Arizona, echo Dr. Pearlman's advice, Jill and Chris Rutter found that giving each child a special evening alone once a month became a positive event for parent and child. "It was eye opening for us—they emerged as individuals to us." Jill said, adding that the individual time was a solution to the stress both parents felt when the twins were younger. "We couldn't spend enough time with each of them, after having given our undivided attention to Scott, their older brother."

"Just being aware that one of them is more needy than the other at different times has eliminated some of the concern we had about treating them as individuals," Chris noted.

Regardless of how parents label the demands of multiple parenting, stress management experts suggest that it is not the events that are stressful, but rather how you react to them. "Just being aware" may be the first step in reacting positively to the challenges of multiples and enjoying them as individuals who are alike yet different. ♥

Ann-Marie Nelson of Scottsdale, Arizona, is a freelance writer and mother of 20-year-old twin boys.

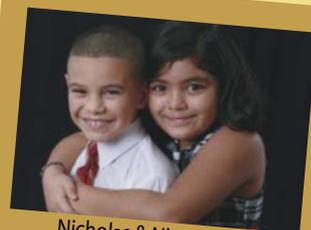
Holiday Photos from our Readers!



Adelyn & Jonathan • 3 mos



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Nicholas & Nia • 8 years



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Anna and Johnny • 11 mos



Ryan & Riley • 7 mos



Audrey & Ethan • 10.5 mos



Kate & Tyler • 6 mos



Aubrey & Autumn 8mos



Addison & Alyssa • 5 Mos



Aliya & Anthony • 3yrs



Ashton & Landon • 9.5 mos



Bradley & Desmond • 1 week



Andy & Austin • 4 weeks



Ethan & Alessandra • 6 mos



Noah & Elijah • 8 mos



Joshua & Emily • 2 yrs



Kenessa & Kyler • 5yrs



Makenzie & Holden 2yrs



Christian & Jackson • 5yrs, Peyton • 3yrs, Addylin & Keegan • 1 yr



Katie & Emily 3, Meghan & John • 10 mos



Matthew & Isaiah • 2.5 yrs



Max Wiley & Bergen Cooper • 8 mos



Zachary with twins Jasmine & June • 7 mos



Natalie and Jeremiah • 11 mos



Rachel and Anna • 6 mos



Rita and Jackson • 6 mos



Rachel & Sara • 3 yrs



Sarah & Priscilla • 6 mos



Rory & Charlie • 4 mos



Savannah, Tyler & Madeline • 3 yrs



Stephen & Gianna • 9 mos

The Logistics of a Hassle-Free Holiday

Photos courtesy of Getty Images



(Family Features) The holidays are supposed to be filled with love and good cheer, but the logistics of shopping for gifts, sending out cards, taking family trips and shipping packages can leave even the jolliest of people in a Scrooge-like mood.

Fortunately, there are some ways you can take the hassle out of the holidays and make them a little brighter for yourself and those around you.

SHOP SMART

Avoid long lines, crowded parking lots and out-of-stock items with these helpful hints:

Get Ready — Before you head out to the mall, make a list of the gifts you want to buy and do some online price comparison. Use sites like BizRate, DealTime or Shopzilla, as well as check local ads to find the best price. You may want to call your local store to see if they have your item in stock, saving yourself a trip if they don't have it.

Shop Early — Plan to shop early in the day, and early in the season. Morning crowds tend to be lighter and sales assistants tend to be more attentive first thing. And the earlier in the season you shop, the less you have to deal with long lines and frustrated shoppers. Plus, this year, while there are 29 shopping days between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there are only 20 shipping days.

Wrap It Up — Pay a little extra and let a charity group at the store wrap your gifts for you. This saves you time later and frees you up to get other things done — and you help a good cause.

If you do any online or catalogue shopping, avoid having packages left on your doorstep by getting a mailbox at The UPS Store. You get a mailbox with a real street address, which accepts packages from all carriers. And, you can choose to receive an e-mail or text when you have a package waiting, avoiding unnecessary trips.

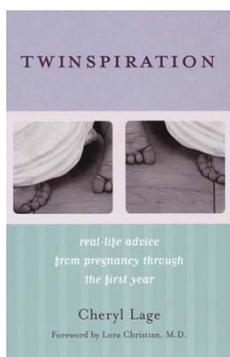
NO-HASSLE HOLIDAY PACKING

Make sure your carefully chosen gifts get to their destinations intact with these helpful tips:

Continued on page 48

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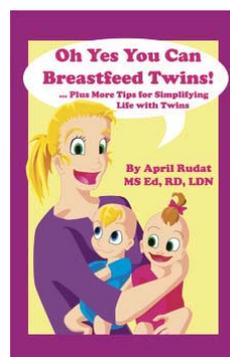
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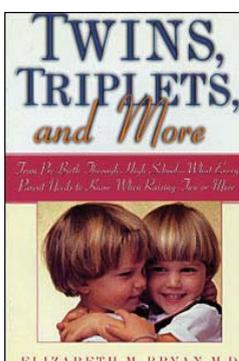


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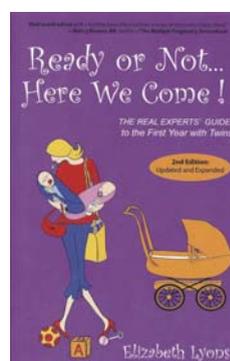


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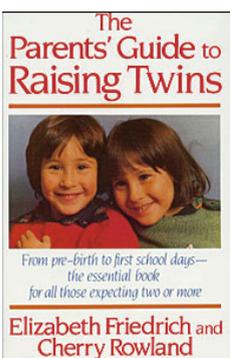
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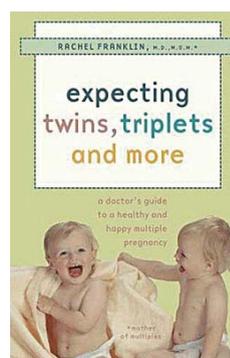


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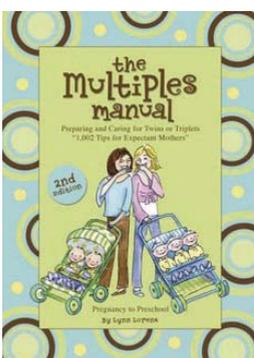
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Price: \$14.95 Published by St. Martin's Griffin Oklahoma City family physician Dr. Rachel McClintock Franklin is the mother of twins born in 2001. A frequent media contributor, including to *Twins™ Magazine*, Dr. Franklin provides the "girlfriend's guide to twin pregnancies" in this informative and often humorous book. 280 pages, softbound

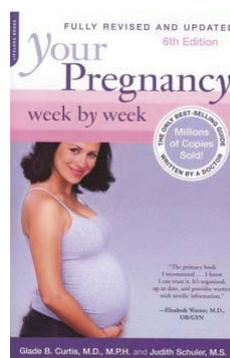


The Multiples Manual

by Lynn Lorenz

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Author Lynn Lorenz is an identical twin herself, and the mother of triplets and a singleton. She's an accountant by profession, and developed this wonderful handbook. 288 pages, softbound



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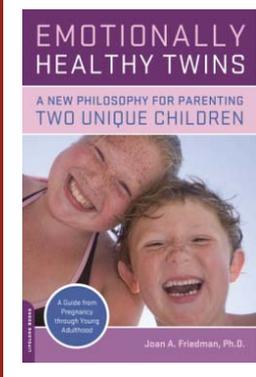
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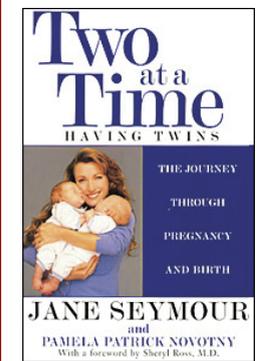


Emotionally Healthy Twins

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Emotionally Healthy Twins draws on the authors unique experience as a twin, as a mother of twins, and as a psychotherapist and outlines the seven key concepts for helping twins develop into self-realized, unique individuals while offering parents specific strategies for each stage in their children's growth. Paperback, 221 pages.

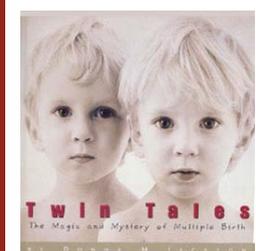


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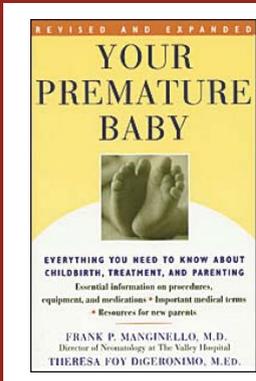


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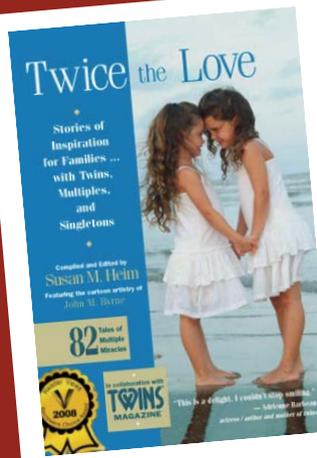


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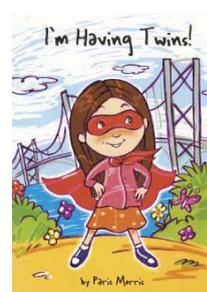


Twice the Love is a Winner of the 2007 Best Parenting/Family Book in Reader Views Annual

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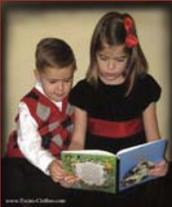
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DON'T

—Wrap boxes in brown paper or tie with string.

—Use materials like newspaper or real popcorn to cushion items.

—Use old boxes or gift boxes for shipping items.

—Use duct tape, masking tape or cellophane tape to seal your boxes for shipping.

For even less hassle, let the certified packing experts at The UPS Store handle the logistics of getting your gifts safely to your loved ones for the holidays. Participating locations offer the Pack & Ship Promise, which will reimburse customers in the event a center-packed item shipped via UPS is lost or damaged. Details are available at www.theupsstore.com.



DON'T LUG YOUR LUGGAGE

Navigating airport security, crowded terminals and long check-in lines can be stressful enough. Add luggage and gifts into the holiday travel mix and things can get really unpleasant. One solution travelers are turning to is shipping luggage to their destinations.

"Traveling without a suitcase is a tremendous convenience, especially during the hectic holiday travel season. Having your luggage awaiting your arrival and tracking it along the way is even better," said Bryan Vial, The UPS Store franchisee from Phoenix, Ariz. "Ship your luggage as is or place it in a box for shipment. Or, at select locations, you can purchase a luggage box and avoid a suitcase altogether."

Some major airline baggage fees can add up to over \$100. Vial says that a luggage box of comparable size shipped via UPS Ground service is competitively priced and saves you time and hassle at the airport. If you are a member of the Automobile Association of America, you can receive a 15 percent discount off the full retail price of eligible products and services, and 5 percent off domestic U.S. shipping costs. Visit www.theupsstore.com for more information.

Luggage Shipping Tips

—Because of the duties and taxes associated with international shipments, The UPS Store does not recommend shipping luggage internationally.

—Federal Aviation Administration restrictions prohibit shipping hazardous materials, including colognes and perfumes, aerosol sprays, nail polish and cigarette lighters via air.

—Include packaging tape and a return shipping label in the luggage box for use when returning home.



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

KEY DATES FOR HOLIDAY SHIPPING

—Monday is the busiest shipping day of the week.

—The busiest shipping week of the 2010 season is expected to be December 13 to 17.

—If you are shipping international or to military personnel overseas, contact The UPS Store location nearest you to determine the best date to ensure on-time delivery.

—Most ground packages require five days or less to reach their destination, but if you're shipping coast-to-coast, it may take longer.

Last-Minute Shipping Dates:

—Tuesday, December 21 — Ship UPS 3 Day Select for delivery Friday, December 24.

—Wednesday, December 22 — Ship UPS 2nd Day Air for delivery Friday, December 24.

—Thursday, December 23 — Ship UPS Next Day Air for delivery Friday, December 24.

Happy Holidays



The Month before Christmas

by Craig Chappelow

'Twas a month before Christmas, when all through
the house,
Things seemed fairly blissful for me and my spouse.
The stockings were hung from the chimney with care,
The twins soon turn 3 and I still have some hair.

The kids were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of Pokémon danced in their heads.
Andrew in one room, Benjamin another...
And just down the hall slept Thomas, their brother.

It all seems at peace 'til suddenly we remember
All three have birthdays in the month of December!
Away to the mall I flew like a flash,
To compete with the mobs and spend way too much
cash.

The car slipped and skidded in the new fallen snow,
And I realized I had but three dollars or so,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But an ATM machine, so bright and so clear!
I pulled out my card and shoved it in quick,
Then saw my low balance and felt instantly sick.

More rapid than eagles, expenses they came,
And I whined and I whimpered and I called them by
name:

Double groceries! Double diapers! Quadruple Ear
Infection!

Twice the car seats! Twice the clothing selection!

To the top of the stores, to the top of the mall,
Spend it! Spend it! Spend away all!
Double our insurance, new savings accounts,
Save up for college in staggering amounts.
Our car is too small, buy a new minivan.
Give the sitter a raise—as much as we can.

Then comes November and we don't prepare,
For our checkbook is empty, our savings go bare.

When I look up ahead, the future is bright
'Til I think of orthodontics and corrected eyesight.
Arrive at the mall; try to bury my sorrow,
I'll go shopping today and I'll worry tomorrow.
The brightly lit stores give my spirits a lift,
As I think of my kids and each perfect gift.

Benjamin's easy, I know what to get,
But where will I find a "junior surgery set?"
I thought of one eve as I dozed in the den;
When I had a house call from my son, Dr. Ben.

He'd spotted a blister aside of my toe,
Made a quick diagnosis—that blister must go.
His actions were sure, his treatment was drastic,
He yanked off the skin with his pliers of plastic.

The right gift for Andrew is equally clear,
I'll find him some tools for his locksmith career.
No latch can contain him, no lock can hold fast;
When Andrew decides that he wants to get past.

One day rang our doorbell, then rang out some more,
And then my wife Sara did answer the door.
On the porch stood Andrew, he unlocked it himself,
And she laughed when she saw him in spite of herself.

I shop 'til I drop and find all kinds of gifts,
I cross Thomas, Sara, in-laws off my list.
My shopping complete, I begin to whistle,
And fly from the mall like the down of a thistle.

And they heard me exclaim e'er I drove out of sight:
"Merry Christmas to all, and always remember,
If you're going to have kids;
Don't have them all in December!" ♥

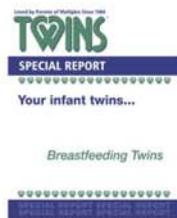
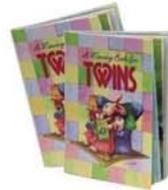
*Craig Chappelow of Greensboro, North Carolina, is a
product director at the Center for Creative Leadership and
the father of three, including twin boys.*

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