

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINS™

Carrying Twins?

Embrace the Big is
Beautiful Mantra!

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**Which Hands
Do Your Twins
Use?**

**When Twins
Play Sports!**

**Curbing the Colic
with Twins!**

**The ABC's
of Assigning
Twins Chores!**

September/October 2013



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On the Cover:

Meet these adorable one-year-old fraternal twins, John and Kennedy from Livermore, California. They are the 3rd and 4th children to proud parents Joe and Krista. They were shocked and so excited when they found out they were having twins! "Every day is amazing and I still can't believe we have twins," states mom Krista. "They are the happiest babies and love watching their older siblings run around the house. They also love being outside and playing with the family dogs. Their favorite song right now is Happy Birthday and both start smiling and laughing right when they hear it. They both just started walking and they are very proud of themselves! They are amazing little babies who make our family complete," adds Krista.

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Fall is my most favorite season of the year... I just love when the weather starts changing and getting cooler and I also really love seeing all the beautiful vibrant fall colors that surround us.

Fall for us also of course means that with four boys (including 15-year-old fraternal twins) we also have to coordinate and manage sports in four different places and usually at the same exact time! We are always on the go, frantically running from field to field and sport to sport and hoping we can catch a glimpse of as many minutes as we can before having to run off to the next event. What's even worse is when I somehow forget we are the assigned "Snack Family" for the day and should have precisely 13 bags of grapes, cleaned and washed and placed in a baggie for half-time and 13 snacks and drinks for after the game and only discover this after we arrive and have to take another boy to his game in 10 minutes! Or, when it is team picture day and your youngest just left wearing opposite color socks that don't even match the uniform! This is when you just need to take a step back, breathe and laugh at the chaos!

Luckily, my twins have always had separate interests and started playing different sports in the 3rd grade when one of my boys just wasn't into soccer anymore and wanted to start playing football and the other twin absolutely loved soccer. Now they both play their respective sports at the high school level and they both truly love what they do! So we really haven't had to deal with the issue of when twins compete in the same sport.

I have heard over and over how teachers, other parents and coaches treat twins as if it's an all-or-nothing deal. Meaning, if one twin is more skilled than the other and there is only one spot, often, they will not take the more skilled twin if the other twin is also not asked to be on the team as well. Sometimes, twins will get placed on the team even if one twin deserves a spot and the other doesn't. Regardless, this sends a message to the twins that they are not valued as an individual and only come as a "set"! If they both are asked to be on the team when only one deserves a spot, this can be more detrimental to the self-esteem of both children.

In this issue we include an article entitled, **"Be a Good Sport & Let Me Win...When Twins Play Sports Together"** that you will definitely want to read. We also address this same exact problem in an interesting article written from a 15-year-old twin girls perspective of how her and her twin sister were always treated the same and as a set!

We always caution parents to be sure to treat your twins as individuals and find what their

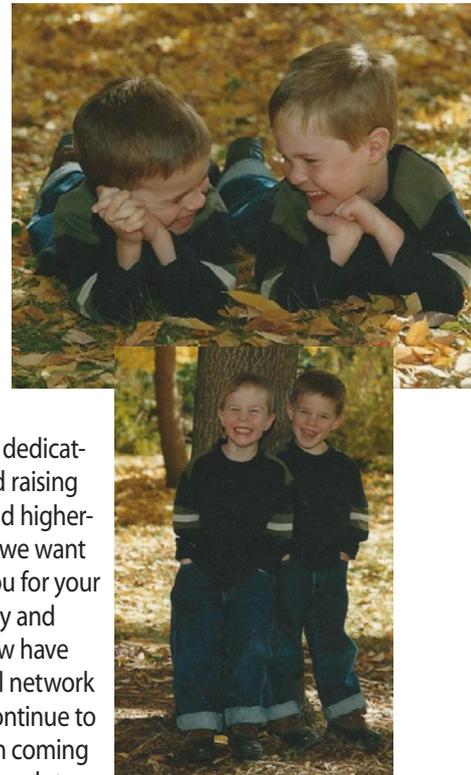
individual passion and talents are---they are not always the same just because your twins are identical! It is your job as a parent to find each of your children's passion and this is certainly an even bigger challenge when you have identical twins and have to continually deal with this issue with their peers, teachers and coaches. Having a planned response to this issue will help you, your twins and everyone involved handle these type of situations much better and your twins will appreciate the fact that they are each valued as individuals and not only seen as a set that must be together at all times.

Also in this issue we feature highlights from my recent trip to the International Twins Association's 79th annual convention that was held in Las Vegas over Labor Day and also feature an article on how to adjust to life with twins plus one more! We also include tips on curbing colic with twins and also give you the ABCs on assigning your pre-school age twins chores!

As we end our 29th year and look to our 30th year of publishing the ONLY national/international parenting magazine solely dedicated to having and raising twins, triplets and higher-order multiples, we want to thank all of you for your continued loyalty and support! We now have the largest social network following and continue to gain momentum coming into 2014! We have lots of BIG plans to celebrate our 30th anniversary and it is our promise that we will continue to be YOUR best and most reliable source of information on everything relating to TWINS!

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed
Christa Reed,
Editor-in-Chief



Dear TWINS Editor:

My name is Erica and I live in Coomera Queensland, Australia and I am having an issue I was hoping to get some advice on. My Twins are age 2 1/2 and still have a milk Bottle at night time to go to sleep. I have been trying to wean them off their bottles but it has been sooo difficult. They had dummies when they were

babies up until the age of 1 and it was very easy to wean them off their dummies. I'm contemplating taking away their bottles and giving them back

their dummies just for sleep as I know they would take them and hope in a little bit they can disappear again as well ... I know it seems a bit of an around about thing to do but I'm struggling with these bottles and really wanted to get rid of them! Just wanted other people's thoughts on the idea and any advice would be appreciated!

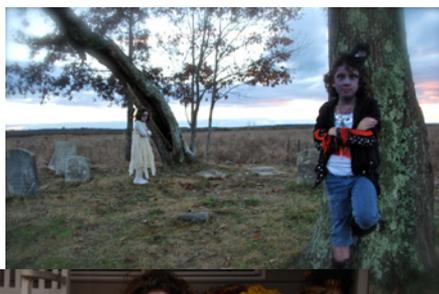
Thanks,
Erica Liddell, Via email
Coomera Queensland, Australia

Editor's Response: *Do they only drink from bottles or do they drink from cups all other times and only drink from a bottle at bedtime? From my personal experience of having four boys (including fraternal twins who are almost 16 now!) when my twins were young and we were all ready to get rid of the bottles, I told them that bottles were for babies and because they were such "big boys" now they needed to give their bottles to the babies. I had them put each bottle we had in a bag labeled "For Babies" with a picture of a few babies I printed from my computer. I really made a "big deal" about what big*

boys and helpers they were and how great it was to give their bottles to the babies who needed them and then I immediately got rid of the bag--no more bottles in the house. Without the bottles there you can't give them any at bedtime but we then started giving them each a cup to drink of water right before bed. If you have already weaned them off the pacifiers then you may not want to go back and give them those again if they don't use them anymore, however, ultimately you will have to determine what will work best for your pair. Good luck, stay strong and be consistent!! You can do this!!

Dear TWINS:

I wanted to share with you some Halloween photos that are not your typical happy and cute Halloween photos! We couldn't resist the setting on our way trick-



or-treating last year. Our identical twin girls, Lillyanne and Allyson were 8-years-old at the time of these photos last year on October 31, 2012. We live in Plympton, Massachusetts and these photos were taken near our home in Halifax, Massachusetts. Lilly was a very scary zombie and we were very happy with how scary her makeup turned out. She scared a lot of small children while we were out trick-or-treating. Ally dressed up as a Monster High character Operetta. And yes that is a real cemetery. Happy Halloween everyone!

Sincerely,
Matt & Karen Foye, Via email
Plympton, MA

NOMOTC changes their name and brand after 53 years!



The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) has recently changed their name and brand to the Multiples of America (MOA) after 53 years. This major change was implemented at their recent annual convention this past July where they also elected a new president, Kimberly Ozark of Orland Park, Illinois. This is an exciting and unprecedented time for us and as the new president of the morphing organization Multiples of America, Ms. Ozark is charged with branding the organization's agenda to reflect the changing demographics of the families and caregivers of multiples in the 21st century. Ms. Ozark's message to the board and members affirmed that rebranding the organization will build the future through matching resources with changing demographics, learning's, and technology while drawing upon the foundation of the past and a 53-year track record of support and being a constant source of evolving information and research. The changes for the organization, "Is a resurgence of membership numbers, increased donations and sponsorships from companies, and an increase in partnerships with hospitals and researchers around the world, in part, due to the rebranding effort," says Ms. Ozark. "We want to emphasize our uniqueness of being the premier group on all things multiples-related – providing our support to parents/caregivers of multiples, being the first-line educational source for information, and revitalizing the importance the organization plays worldwide in research, be it internal or through outside professional researchers."

Twin Sisters Launch ‘Shortcuts’ and their own ‘Pocket Tee’ to Help Less Fortunate Kids Buy School Supplies!

Lauren and Lorraine are identical twins age 21 from the Philippines and are both pursuing their passion for fashion and business as social entrepreneurs! They are on a mission to improve children’s education one ‘Pocket Tee’ at a time! These energetic and dynamic twins run an online business based in Manila, and sell their

products for a really good cause. “Poverty is really high in our country so we use our online store as a vehicle to



help make a difference. So for every sale of our product ‘Pocket Tee’, we donate a set of school supplies to a child in need,” says Lauren. “Basically, we dedicate ourselves in reaching out to the less fortunate one Pocket Tee at a time...” To date, their company has already donated school supplies to several children from Itaa Elementary School, a public school in Muntinlupa City; and in July 2013, they organized a charity event called “Time to Give Back” where school supplies were distributed as well. Each ‘Pocket Tee’ by Lauren and Lorraine is made to order in which customers choose from a wide range of fabric prints, and base garments to make their own unique design of color and texture that suites their own style! There is even a special line for kids called ‘Pocket Tee Junior’. To learn more about Pocket Tee and these twins that are giving back each day, visit them on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/ShortcutsApparel

Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá

Showing at the Fowler Museum at UCLA October 13, 2013 through March 2, 2014

Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá, and is one of a suite of exhibitions the museum is launching in celebration of the Museum’s 50th anniversary.

This exhibition explores the power and prevalence of twoness in Yorùbá art and thought with an impressive display of more than 250 carved wood twin memorial figures, known as ere ibeji. The Yorùbá, who live in southwestern Nigeria as well as Togo and Benin, have one of the highest rates of twinning in the world, and special attention is paid to twins, both in life and after.

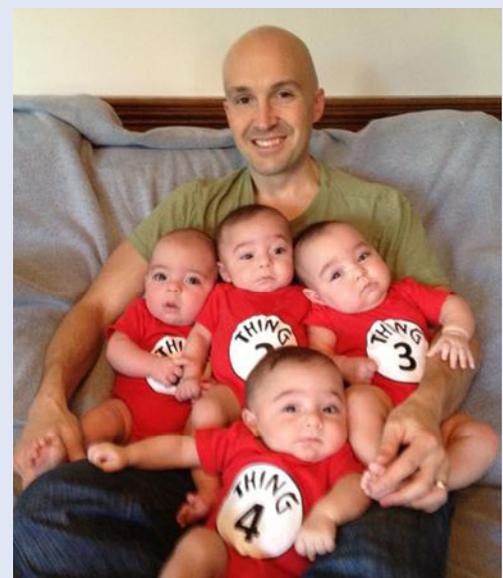
These works from the Fowler’s extraordinary collection display a remarkable stylistic range and illuminate issues of apprenticeship and mastery, local innovation and invention, and the ways their surfaces and adornments show how they were treated and transformed once they left the sculptors’ hands and moved into the hands, hearts, and minds of family members. Additionally, contemporary artist Simone Leigh’s newly commissioned installation Topsy Turvy will incorporate West African plastic dolls (that sometimes substitute for the carved figures) in a dramatic suspended work. Leigh creates sculpture, videos, and installations informed by her interest in African art, ethnographic research, feminism, and performance. While the beautiful sculptures on display are created upon the loss of a twin, the messages in the exhibition are very much about the specialness of twins and multiples in Yorùbá (West African) culture, and much of their programming around it relates to those notions. The museum will be hosting a special “Twins Day” for families on December 8, 2013. More information can be found at: <http://www.fowler.ucla.edu/events/twin-day>

Quad-father Nicholas Tierney Competes in IRONMAN World Championships in Kona, Hawaii

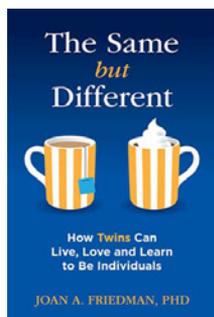
New parents can be overwhelmed with one child, but four... at the same time? Last year, Nicholas Tierney and his wife’s lives changed when they welcomed their quadruplets (three boys and one girl) into the world. Born at 29 weeks, however, the quadruplets spent over a month in the NICU, which put Nick’s personal life and goals on hold.

With the quadruplets healthy and happy, Nick (of Powell, OH) is fulfilling his dreams of competing in the IRONMAN World Championships in Kona, Hawaii — the ultimate long-distance triathlon — consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bicycle ride and a 26.2-mile run, raced in that order and without a break.

As a member of this year’s Kona-Inspired program, Nick is raising awareness and funds for the charity, Eleonore Rocks, which raises money for families of critically ill children. Check out Nick’s story here.



http://konainspired.thismoment.com/base/kona?region_id=us-en&content_id=980&tab_id=25



The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to Be Individuals by Dr. Joan Friedman

The book is one of a kind—written exclusively to address issues specific to adult twins. It instructs twins how to have an honest and authentic relationship; explains why they may feel disappointed about friendships that do not

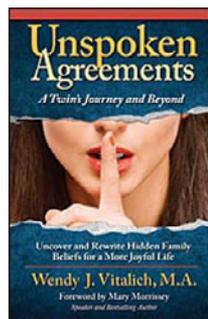
match the twin connection; teaches them how to work through their guilt about wanting more space; discusses why some twins are afraid they might never love anyone as much as they love their twin; reveals how influential twin connections are in determining the choice of a spouse, a profession, and a place to live; offers tips and strategies to navigate through the issues of separation, individuality, and codependence; and provides insight and understanding to families and significant others coping with twin struggles.

<http://www.joanafriedmanphd.com/book-2/>

'Unspoken Agreements, A Twins Journey and Beyond' by Wendy J. Vitalich, M.A.

Unspoken Agreements: A Twin's Journey and Beyond is a book for everyone whether you are a twin or not. In this book you will...

- Read interviews from 15 sets of fraternal and identical twins that illustrate how unspoken agreements operated in their relationships.
- Be guided through the processes of awareness, uncovering and rewriting your agreements, forgiveness, and healing.
- Take an inner journey to create a more joyful life.
- 224 pages - \$17.99 (paperback)



<http://www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore/book.php?w=978-1-62563-247-0>

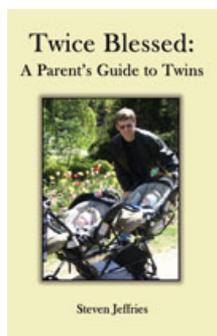
Hot NEW Natural Baby Product...

Are you looking for a natural alternative when giving your babies their baths? We have found the perfect solution...hand-made goat milk soap! Peaceful by Nature Farm has launched a brand new line of hand-made goat milk soap just for babies! Their Unscented Baby Bath has no added scent and is a balanced blend of moisturizing oils with added skin loving Kokum Butter. Their Unscented Oatmeal Baby Bath is the same as their Unscented Baby Bath with the addition of finely ground Oatmeal (this blend of ingredients are for Mommies that would like the extra soothing qualities of oatmeal in their babies' baths.) Their third soap is a Lavender Oatmeal Baby Bath. It combines the moisturizing, soothing suds of the first two with the added relaxing benefits of lavender essential oil. You can learn more about their new baby line of all natural, hand-made soaps and place your order by visiting: <http://www.peacefulbynaturefarm.com/>



'Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins' by Steven Jeffries

If you enjoy the articles inside TWINS Magazine written by popular writer, Steven Jeffries than you will definitely enjoy reading his new book called "Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins" based on some of the articles he has written and available in both paperback and digital formats. So you just found out you are expecting twins? Or, you are already have twins this book takes you from getting the news, through the pregnancy, the first year, and beyond. A father of twins informatively and humorously explains twin issues including the preparation, getting help, selecting car seats and day care, traveling and moving with twins, amongst many others.



http://www.bookstandpublishing.com/book_details/Twice_Blessed. Price \$12.95 (paperback) and \$4.99 (eBook)

Check out Fun, bee-themed Halloween organic Onesies, bibs and tees for babies and toddlers!

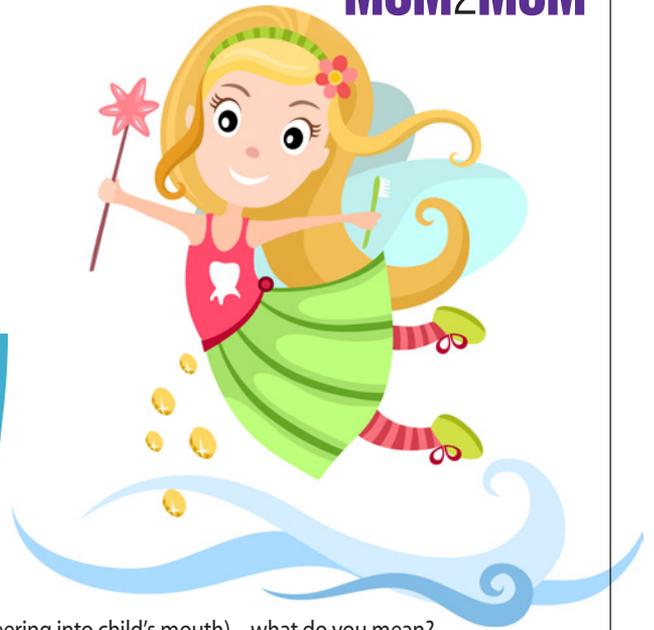
Just in time for Halloween your twins can "bee scary" and "bee spooky" with these adorable bibs! beeXpression has these good-natured, light-hearted messages on all of their bibs, Onesies and tees and each item they sell is 100% organic. They also have Holiday themed items as well. A portion of each sale is donated to a non-profit grief program for kids and items are reasonably priced ranging from \$10 to \$24! These Holiday items along with their everyday bee-themed clothing can be purchased online at www.beeXpression.com



UNDONE

by

TEETH



by Stephanie Zurn

Teeth are getting an unusual amount of attention in my house. It could be the two five and a half year old mouths that are losing teeth at a rate that has the tooth fairy on the picket lines demanding higher wages to match the increased workload.

Robbie, the boy half of my boy/girl twins, lost his second tooth two days ago – a couple of weeks after Annie, the girl half, lost two in the same day. And they both have other loose teeth waiting to come out any day – probably the day where the only money mommy (I mean the tooth fairy) has in her wallet is a \$20 bill.

My first thought about all this teeth losing (at what I thought was an early age) was, is this normal - or have my kid's eat-like-a-bird habits finally caught up with them? Maybe their teeth are falling out because they don't have the nutrients they need to sustain normal gum function.

I got over that fear soon, though – after reading that it is, in fact, normal, on the internet, where everything is true. And now I am just enjoying the funny happenings that are occurring because of the tooth loss.

My favorite is the narratives the kids are telling – especially to strangers, and always at a high volume so that everyone in the room has the privilege of hearing. Robbie's tooth story is particularly entertaining. Long before he lost teeth the natural way, he knocked out one of his front teeth after a series of traumas. His telling goes like this:

To stranger – you see my teeth, I just lost this one, but the one on the top came out early cause I bit my daddy.

Not entirely wrong, he leaves out the first two blows the tooth took before it finally gave up when the boy did bight down on a pair of his dad's jeans.

Annie doesn't care as much about how her teeth came out, she is living high off the fact that she was the first one to lose a tooth (at least the natural way). That may not seem like such a big deal, but when your twin is a hyper-competitive achiever that seems to do everything first, you'll take what you can get. And it does, to her great pleasure, drive Robbie mad. He tries to use the 'I really lost one first' (the knocked out one), but it isn't working. Annie just flashes a big toothless grin and chirps, that one doesn't count

I've also found humor in the whole tooth fairy bit. As I've said I was caught a little off guard when the first (two) teeth fell out, a funny story that went like this:

Annie – Mom, what's wrong with my tooth?

Me (peering into child's mouth) – what do you mean?

Me again (after seeing one tooth completely missing and the other dangling by a thread) –Holy (kid-friendly explicative) you're losing teeth, why didn't you tell me they were loose.

Kid shrugs, I realize the already-lost tooth is who knows where, assume she swallowed it, search madly for it, find it lying peacefully, bleeding out on my ottoman.

Which brings me back to the tooth fairy, who, as demonstrated above, was clearly unprepared to collect and leave a gift for two teeth. Fortunately, I did have one dollar in my wallet (which almost never happens) so I, um, she coupled it with some stickers, craft kit gem stones, and whatever else was lying around that the kid would not recognize as having come from our house.

And in the morning it was well received.

But there was just enough panic for me from all this that a trinket-shopping trip made its way quickly to the top of my to-do list. I also hoard dollar bills.

I've come to realize, actually, that I'm living in constant fear of being unprepared for a tooth loss. It's somewhat unnerving.

Really, I'll just be glad when this whole tooth losing thing is behind us. What does that take, five/six years? I'll have to look that one up on the internet.

Of course, then I'll have to worry about Robbie knocking out a permanent tooth. But I don't think the tooth fairy collects permanent teeth.

Does she? 💖

Stephanie Zurn is a writer, photographer and sometimes overly ambitious mother of three – including a set of boy/girl twins. She lives in Washington State with her husband, kids and a cat named Holly.



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AMY GOES TO THE Hospital

By Amy Davidson Lombardo and Jacqueline Davidson Kopito

When I was in the 4th grade, I was told that I needed to have surgery to remove a cyst behind my right earlobe. My doctor assured me that I would be fine and told me not to worry. I wasn't worried at all; I just had two questions for the doctor. The first question was if my twin sister, Jackie could come with me. The second question was how many days of school would I miss.

My parents told me that I would only be in the hospital for one night, but I would miss a couple of days of school. My mom said that she would be able to stay with me in my hospital room and assured me that I was going to be ok after the surgery. Again, I really wasn't thinking too much about the surgery, I was concerned about Jackie. She would be all alone in our bedroom for the first time in her life. Jackie would also have to walk to school without me, and go to ballet class alone too. Would she be able to manage on her own? I was feeling very anxious!

I checked into the hospital the night before my surgery and was surprised by the non-stop flurry of activity. I had nurses taking my blood pressure and checking my temperature and a radiologist taking X-rays. Everyone was very kind to me and the doctor said that I was the best 10 year old patient he had ever had. Even though everyone assured me that I would be fine, I just could not stop thinking about how Jackie was doing. My mom thought it would be a good idea to call Jackie that night to say goodnight. I definitely wanted to call Jackie! To think I was mad at her last week because she didn't share her new lip gloss with me. She said I was still recovering from a cold and she didn't want to catch my germs. And she was right! Stupid me. Now, here I was in the hospital, alone and wishing Jackie was with me.

My Mom handed me the phone. Jackie immediately told me that our younger sister Michelle was going to stay in our room and sleep in my bed to keep her company. "Thank goodness!" I said. Now I was feeling better. Michelle to the rescue! Jackie and I could always count on Michelle. She was the best sister anyone could ask for. We finished our conversation and she told me everything was going to be ok and then we said good night.

After the surgery, I woke up feeling a little tired. I had a white bandage wrapped around my head which covered my entire face except for two tiny holes around my eyes and another around my mouth. I looked like a mummy. The surgeon popped in to report that everything had gone as planned and that I would be playing and dancing ballet in no time at all. While smiling under my mask I started to peek around my room and was delighted to discover that it was filled with colorful balloons in all shapes and sizes. On the table were many cute get-well cards, a huge box of my favorite homemade chocolate chip cookies and some adorable stuffed



animals. This was great! I couldn't wait to show Jackie all of my gifts. Before I knew it, my dad and my sisters were all in my hospital room and everyone was so happy to see me!

Jackie looked a little shocked when she saw me. I knew she wouldn't say it, but I knew she was thinking that I looked like a mummy and that she was happy it wasn't her looking this way! That's the thing about being a twin; you always know what the other one is thinking...good or bad. I silently forgave her and she gave me a hug and couldn't wait to take me home. Mom packed everything up and off we went, promising to return in a couple of days to get my bandages removed.

I was excited to be home from the hospital, especially to be back in our room with Jackie. She made a big 'Welcome Home' sign painted in bright colors which she hung above my bed and cleared space on my bed for all of my new stuffed animals. Later that night as we were drifting off to sleep, Jackie told me how much she missed me and I told her how concerned I was about her being alone at home without me. She said I was being ridiculous; after all I was the one in the hospital having surgery! Jackie was right and I was happy that we were together again....two happy twins!

Final Twin Thought: Sisters are always there for each other. ♥



CARRYING TWINS

by Ruby Coats-Mosher

Embrace the

“Big is Beautiful” Mantra



Ruby Coats Mosher
resides in Emporia,
Kansas, is a veterinar-
ian and the mother of
fraternal twin girls.

Jane, the mother of 2-year-old identical twins was miserable throughout her pregnancy. “The nausea was bad,” she says, “but worst of all was the weight gain. I was huge. I felt like a fat hippo waddling around. I loved my babies, but I hated my distended abdomen. I wanted the pregnancy to hurry up and be over which made me feel very guilty.”

Women expecting multiples go through some big changes during their pregnancies. While singleton mothers may say, “I was as big as a house,” mothers of multiples would say, “I was like the Houston Astrodome, and the Green Bay Packers came to play ball—for nine months!”

There’s no doubt about it. Two or three (or more) babies take up a lot of room in the abdomen. As the babies grow, her abdomen seems to grow from the size of a balloon to that of a dirigible.

Keeping a Positive Attitude

During this growth period, some women, like Jane, may experience intense dislike for their bodies, perceiving themselves as fat. And it’s not surprising that this perception brings on negative feelings. So it is understandable, in our thin-worshipping society, when a woman feels uncomfortable watching her weight steadily rise. But it is important to remember that weight gain is a normal, healthy and necessary part of pregnancy.

It helps to know that most of the normal weight gained due to pregnancy is not fat; only a small amount of fat is stored in the body in anticipation of breastfeeding. Most of the weight gain is due to the babies themselves, their placentas, amniotic fluid and increased maternal blood volume.

Since there is really no such thing as an “average” multiple-birth pregnancy, professionals disagree on how much weight a woman should gain. “A ball park figure is about 44 pounds,” says Cheryl Thole, M.S., R.D., L.D.

But more important than quantity is quality. A woman will gain the right amount for her particular pregnancy if she eats properly. Thole recommends sticking to a healthy diet of milk products, meats, fruits, vegetables, breads and cereals. Thole warns that, “even though a woman needs an extra 300 to 500 calories per fetus, those calories need to come from good food. Being pregnant is not a license to splurge on candy bars and potato chips.”

And certainly, even though a woman may be overweight or just feel overweight, pregnancy is not the time to diet. This is the time for women to relax their ideal image of their bodies; for some women, pregnancy can be a time to come to terms with their physical selves.

Susan, mother of 3-year-old fraternal twins, had been a chronic dieter since adolescence. “When I got pregnant,” she says, “I knew I had to eat better. Gradually, with my doctor’s and dietician’s help, I came to respect my body. After all, I told myself, if my body could bear twins, it is a truly remarkable body!”

Reassurance from Loved Ones

Even the most upbeat and optimistic mother-to-be may not be able to prevent having occasional bouts of negative feelings about her pregnant body. Jane, with her intensely negative self image, felt guilty about it. She wondered if it would hurt the babies. “Although I wanted the pregnancy to be over,” she says, “I didn’t want my babies to be born prematurely because of my attitude.”

Jeanine Roembach, M.D., a psychiatrist at Menniger’s Institute in Topeka, Kansas, stipulates that a woman can adversely affect her fetus if her body image is so negative that she stops eating. Women in this situation may want to seek professional aid in feeling better about themselves. Another way to boost self esteem during pregnancy says Roembach, is for a woman to focus on the positive aspects of her pregnancy. She should think about what a wondrous feat her

body is accomplishing by creating two (or more) new lives at the same time.

“A woman’s husband can also be a great source of support and positive feelings,” Roembach says. He can help reassure her that he loves her pregnant body just as he loves her unpregnant body. A woman can also obtain support through an intimate friend or family member.

Say What?

When a woman conceives multiples, it is as if a neon light turns on above her head proclaiming, “MULTIPLE PREGNANCY...PUBLIC PROPERTY... NO QUESTION TOO RUDE, NOR TO PERSONAL!”

Jane agrees. “I always felt fat,” she says. “It didn’t help when people came up and said, ‘Wow, you’re really big! Just how much weight have you gained?’ Can you believe their nerve? Sometimes it made me so mad I replied, ‘Quite a bit, but I’m pregnant, you know. What about you?’”

People’s unthinking comments can cut to the quick. Their words can be especially sharp when the tumultuous hormones of pregnancy already have a woman on the edge.

Just what is the proper way to respond to inappropriate questions? That’s difficult to say. It depends on several factors, such as what kind of person you are, whether the questioner is a friend, relative or passerby, and whether the question was meant to hurt feelings or was simply inquisitive.

For someone like Jane, who has no trouble speaking her mind, the tart response she gave could be appropriate when the remark was meant to hurt her. It is good to remember, however, that most people don’t mean to be rude when they ask a question about your pregnant body. In most cases, they’re just curious about the miracle of a multiple pregnancy. The creation of two or more babies at the same time is an awesome occasion, and many people just can’t restrain themselves from trying to find out more about it.

Although it is understandable that others are interested in a woman’s pregnancy, that doesn’t give them the right to roughshod over her feelings. Another mother of twins, Susan, gives a tactful response to personal

questions such as, “How much weight have you gained?” by saying, “Just the right amount my doctor says.” Then she changes the subject. She has recognized the harmless intent of most questions and has refused to let them diminish her self-esteem.

The questions people have asked Liz, another mother of twins, were very different from those posed to Jane and Susan. Liz has a long waist and is 5’9”. When she was in the eight month of her twin pregnancy, she barely looked pregnant with one baby, let alone two. “I just got thicker around the waist,” she says. “I still had all the discomforts—nausea, bloat, shortness of breath, toxemia. I just didn’t look like it.”

The Adoring Public

Liz was elated to be carrying twins and wanted the world to know, and to share her joy. But many people looked at her in disbelief when she told them the news. “You don’t look big enough to be carrying twins,” they said. “Are you sure there are two in there?”

“Of course I was sure!” Liz says. “They kicked me in the ribs and bladder every two minutes.” Those comments made Liz feel inadequate—as if her pregnancy wasn’t as good as other women’s just because she didn’t appear ready to burst at any minute. “I know I was lucky to have so much room for my babies to grow in, but I would look at other women in my doctor’s office and wish I could be huge like them.”

Liz, Jane and Susan all agree that people’s comments bothered them during their pregnancies. They also agree that you can’t stop people from asking rude questions, even though they mean no harm. “Try to let their words run off your back like water off a duck,” Susan suggests.

And mothers-to-be can take heart, Liz adds. “As soon as those babies arrive, all the attention is off your body. Everyone’s eyes are on the babies. Then their big question will be, “Are they twins?” ♥



INFANT

Curbing Colic with Your Twins

by Christina Gagne



Prison camps use recordings of wailing infants as a method of torture, I read in Dr. Harvey Karp's book, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*¹. Given this information, however would my husband, Mathieu, and I endure our twins' colic, I wondered? Could we survive months of endless, agonizing days with our wits intact?

These questions overtook me during the early months of my babies' lives. My answers? Focus on short blocks of time, set simple goals, repeat whatever works for the babies, fit in diversions whenever possible, and keep chanting, "This too shall pass," because it will. Surviving colic wasn't easy, and I can't say I did it graciously, losing weight and

much of my ability to concentrate and converse along the way, but I found the following daily regimen helped me regain my sanity and enthusiasm for parenthood.

The morning, my least favorite block of time, found me concentrating on making it to the twins' first feeding at 9:00 a.m. Marc and Charles fed a couple of times overnight and were usually awake every hour, so, when they arose for the day at 7:00 a.m., I cuddled them in our king-size bed, shushing them and rubbing their backs until 9:00 a.m. This practice selfishly gave me a couple of restful hours to appreciate my quiet twins, but I knew it also gave the boys what they needed - more sleep.

The twins began our next block of time at 9:00 a.m. with a chorus of yelps, and I began thinking about my subsequent goal - making it to their 1:00 p.m. feeding. Taking a deep breath and turning on some classical music as a diversion, I changed and dressed the little guys, fed them, and tried to utilize their vibrating bouncy seats, swings, and slings, usually only getting a few minutes out of each device. On a good day, we managed until about 11:00 a.m. with these methods before the twins became inconsolable. We then needed to get moving, so I packed the little men up in the car or the stroller. The motion seemed to bring the twins some comfort, so we walked and drove for hours. I sometimes endured stretches of screaming and concerned looks from passers-by, so I walked on roads less traveled and drove on the highway to avoid red lights. To battle my fatigue while driving, I tuned into the National

Public Radio station, which kept my brain alert and offered soothing voices for the babies.

I congratulated myself each time I reached 1:00 p.m., the twins' next feeding time. Though the feedings were not easy, I was relieved to have an activity that provided some relative calm. Once finished, we set off on our travels again in the car or the stroller. The late afternoon feeding wasn't until 5:00 p.m., and the intervening hours often crawled by. I knew we were at least benefiting from the walking - me from the physical exercise, and the twins from the fresh air - and I found this a good time to keep up my positive mental exercises, repeating my slogan, "This too shall pass." I also eagerly anticipated my upcoming evening diversions, as I kept concentrating on my next goal, the twins' 5:00 p.m. feeding.

Hooray, I had made it through the 5:00 p.m. feeding, and soon Mathieu would be home from work or a kind loved one would agree to come over and provide some relief. Together, we practiced the "Cuddle Cure" on the twins, a technique I learned from Dr. Karp's book, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*, which proved helpful in calming the babies, at least temporarily. Night after night, we employed this procedure, holding Marc and Charles on their sides with pacifiers in mouths, shushing them, swaying them, and patting their bottoms. Once a twin relaxed, we might try him in a swing or bouncy seat long enough to eat or do some chores, but we'd typically have to return to the shushing and patting before long.

While performing the Cuddle Cure, Mathieu, with his unshakable optimism, diverted me with tales of the fun we'd have with the twins in the future. My friends and relatives retold their life stories and distracted me with gossip. Having these individuals visit in the evening was an enormous lift. I beamed when I saw Mathieu arrive home, and my spirits soared when I heard a friend's car pull up in front of our house, knowing I'd receive a burst of energy from their enthusiasm and conversation.

Several evenings I was on my own and had to muster up vast amounts of energy to pacify the babies myself. I'd pick Charles up, perform the Cuddle Cure, put Charles in a swing, then pick Marc up, use the Cuddle Cure, place him in a swing, return to Charles, and so on. Over time, I figured out a way to practice the Cuddle Cure on both babies simultaneously. I sat in front of the television with my feet up on our reclining chair and held each baby perpendicularly in front of me, one behind the other. I'd turn on a news program to keep my mind from turning to mush, as I shushed and patted for hours.

The next task, setting up for the long overnight, was always a foreboding one, as I thought of the sleep interruptions to follow. But at least Mathieu or a friend usually assisted with the 9:00 p.m. bedtime feeding to try and ensure a calm start to the night and allow me to collapse into bed, hoping to cobble together a few hours of disjointed sleep.

Over time, longer periods of tranquility began to emerge during the days so that we even started socializing in playgroups and baby classes. By 6 months of age, Marc and Charles had conquered colic, and they are now little cherubs. People remark on how happy they appear, making Mathieu and I chuckle and remember how vastly different things were only months before. 

¹ Karp, Harvey. *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. New York: Bantam, 2003.



TODDLERS

TOYING

With Your Toddlers' Minds

by Vera Caccioppoli

Vera Caccioppoli is a freelance writer from Falls Church, Virginia and the mother of triplet boys.

CHOOSING PLAYTHINGS THAT ARE MORE THAN JUST FUN



YOU can choose toys that not only bring smiles to your multiples' faces but teach them a thing or two. However, the overwhelming amount of choices can make you dizzy with indecision. Featured here are great toys that will make shopping easy. These toys are sure to keep your multiples entertained, as well as spark creativity and encourage learning and development. No matter what educational benefits a toy boasts, if it doesn't hold the attention of your child, it's worthless. Deborah Barbara, a pediatric occupational therapist with Skill Builders, says the "most important thing is for a parent to know the child's likes and dislikes and the skills her child has already mastered."

Once they can walk, a new world opens for toddlers. They want to see, touch and taste everything. It's the way they learn about their world. For this reason, look for toys that resemble familiar everyday objects. Toys should have pieces that can be sorted, challenge eye and hand coordination, as well as enhance toddlers' visual and spatial relationships.

Push toys provide beginning walkers with something fun to lean on for needed support. Be sure to choose one that will serve your toddlers after they're steady on their feet. One good suggestion is a multi-generational item like a wagon that adjusts as they grow.

In her book, *Your Baby and Child*, Penelope Leach suggests buying fewer low-cost toys and spending your money on items with the most value. With toys, quantity is not better. Too many toys distract children. It's best to seek stimulating toys with developmental versatility.

BLOCK PARTY



Building blocks are fun and interactive. Cardboard blocks are an excellent choice for toddlers and are high on several mothers of multiples' lists. Because they're lightweight, cardboard blocks rarely hurt children if they're thrown.

Blocks are easy for babies to grasp and provide several levels of learning activities, including stacking, nesting and, later on, shape-matching. They are excellent for hand and eye coordination, concentration, problem-solving, and, best of all, they're just plain fun. Some blocks make a surprising and fun sound when rattled. Parents of triplets suggest buying two sets, but one is probably enough for twins.

BOUNCING BALLS



Balls have great developmental value and are inexpensive. Kids love them and therapists say they help eye-hand coordination as well as motivate gross motor skills. Big fun balls from Gymboree are a real hit with many parents with multiples because they have holes that are easy for kids to grip and they're lightweight which makes them safe for those with good throwing arms.

PUZZLING PUZZLES



Fitting puzzle pieces into an irregularly shaped hole requires the smooth operation of many muscles in the hands and fingers. In addition to the fine motor skills, puzzles boost critical thinking skills and aid concentration. In her book, *Early Childhood Materials and Equipment*, Janice Schultz says "shape/design orientation is one of the most important pre-academic abilities."

She suggests providing several levels of puzzle difficulty. *Small World Toys* makes great first puzzles. They're wooden and have little knobs, making lifting and replacing pieces easy. The shape and color series is also a fun way for multiples to learn colors.

When selecting a shape-sorter, make sure a block can't be forced into the wrong hole. In order for a shape sorter to be a learning device "it must be self-correcting," Schultz says. This means that each block must fit only into its corresponding hole and only when held in the proper position.

Avoid toys that require hammers to bang the shapes into the opening: it's too tempting to use the hammer as a weapon. The best type of shape sorters are the ones that promote continuous action. This is when the completion of the action is also the preparation for a repetition of action. The child is tempted into continuing the activity and, in a subtle way, is being encouraged to lengthen her span of attention.

ENERGETIC PLAY



My toddlers loved practicing getting in and out of the Musical Activity Chair by Fisher Price. Once seated, they can play a built-in drum, tambourine, xylophone or electronic musical notes. Not only are musical sounds enjoyable to toddlers but the chair requires physical coordination to make music and bop to the beat. We only bought one chair for our three, and occasionally there are fights over it.

The Country Kitchen by Little Tikes is also a great toy. It utilizes both gross and fine motor skills and promotes pretend play. Kids love that it resembles a real kitchen, complete with sink and cabinets to open. Heavier than other kitchen models, it isn't easily pushed around by multiples. And there are plenty of activities to keep them busy for a long time.

STIMULATING THE SENSES



Another must-have for multiples is a climber and slide, which is great for interactive and energetic play. They provide endless hours of crawling, climbing, sliding and encourage gross motor and imaginative play. Be sure to choose one with adjustable heights so your toddlers won't quickly outgrow it. Little Tikes has a well-constructed and fun option like the Wave Climber or you should check out the Town House Climber from Step 2. ♥



The ABC's of Assigning Twins Chores

Patricia Edmister, Ph.D. of Sherman Oaks, California, is the former director of developmental psychology and children's study at the California Family Study Center. She is also the mother of fraternal twins.



American family culture has long operated on the assumption that membership in a family entails responsibility as well as privileges—that everyone is required to work to the best of his or her abilities for the good of all members.

As far back as pioneer days, family members were expected to pitch in and help out for the common good. Children as young as 3 years old had daily chores to complete, such as spinning yarn, collecting eggs, etc. In those days, children knew that their contributions were really needed.

While today's parents usually know that helping out gives a youngster a sense of accomplishment and a belief that he has contributed to the well-being of the family, they are often so harried by the pressures of modern living that they often find it easier and quicker to do the job themselves or to hire someone to perform the task for them. The problem with these "solutions" is that they mean parents have to keep on doing the tasks themselves, for their children never learn how, and consequently, never get to feel the sense of accomplishment of a task well done.

After all, when all the time it takes to show the youngster how to do the job, work with him as he practices, check to see that he did it correctly and praise him for a job well done is added up, it often is a hefty figure.

These important goals of family chores are to help children learn the value of work, the responsibilities of family membership and the feeling of having accomplished a goal themselves. The earlier these are instilled in a youngster, the better off he will be—and the better prepared he will find himself for adulthood.



Should preschool-aged children be expected to perform household chores?

Absolutely. By helping out, children can acquire self-confidence in their abilities, a sense of pride in their contributions to the family's well-being, actual skills that will be important to them later in life and an appreciation for the tasks others perform.

How should parents determine what is an appropriate task for their young multiples?

There are certain criteria which should be met before a job is assigned:

- The job should be within the child's range of abilities; he should also be able to accomplish it relatively well, given the coordination, ability to follow directions, physical size and intellectual level.
- It should be a real job—something that the child realizes is truly useful to the family as opposed to a "make-work" type of task designed to keep the child busy or to teach him a lesson.
- It should not always be a job that is disliked by older family members; jobs should be rotated so that different members of the family get more and less distasteful jobs, everyone taking his turn at each.

How should chores be assigned?

Once the above-mentioned criteria are met, children should be given some choices as to which chores they are assigned, whenever possible, since some youngsters enjoy certain tasks more than others. When a task is disliked by all, yet falls within the range of abilities for all, it should be rotated among family members. Keeping a chart with the chores listed down one side

and the days or weeks listed across the top makes keeping track of "turns" easy.

Parents should begin by sitting down with family members and discussing what jobs need to be done and who is able to do them. By discussing the chores, your multiples learn more about the meaning of work and how everyone has a part to play in getting the business of family living accomplished.

Parents need to make clear to their children that not all of the jobs are going to be fun and that "being fun" is not a criterion used in assigning tasks. Parents can help their little workers, however, by ensuring that once a task is accomplished, there is some additional time available for a fun activity like a story or a game.

Parents of both boys and girls should avoid sex-role stereotyping when assigning chores. While in some cases, each child may choose a traditional sex-typed task, parents should never assign tasks on that basis. (They should also monitor their own behavior in that regard; since it sends an important message to children about which person does what in a household.)

Once assigned, parents should let the child have some say in how the task should be done. For example, if it's his job to help walk the dog, let him decide what direction to take on the walk.

How much should parents praise their child for completing his/her tasks?

Parents should always offer praise when it is meaningful, so for the first few times, they should praise the child for how well he/she is trying. After that, they should praise him/her occasionally when they have done an especially good job, and, once in a while, make it a point to be overheard by telling someone else what a good job he/she has done. They needn't feel compelled to give their children rewards or to pay them for the performance of chores, since one purpose of assigning them in the first place is to help the child actively contribute to the family welfare and to recognize that all members of the family contribute, not for the reward, but as part of their responsibility as members of the family.

If parents praise too much, in fact, or if rewards are always attached to the completion of tasks, a child learns to expect and then insist on a reward for his performance. That opens up a whole new "can of worms" and defeats the purpose of assigning the tasks in the first place.

What level of perfection should parents expect?

Parents can't expect perfection of children, and therefore shouldn't assign them jobs that require it. They should keep in mind that part of the purpose of family chores is to learn how to do something, so they should be available to teach their young multiples and to walk them through it the first few times.

Parents shouldn't be overly helpful, however, or they will get the message that he or she isn't really capable of the task, or good enough at it to suit adults. They also shouldn't go back after the child has done his best and re-do or finish the job; that, too, sends the wrong message, for the child will inevitably find out and, again, feel diminished. Rather, the next time, parents should go over the steps of the task again with the child as a reminder.

How should parents handle accusations that the assignment of jobs isn't fair?

Many parents of twins hate to be accused of being unfair. Rather than worry constantly about this problem, however, parents need to determine what the child really means by the accusation. In some cases involving twins, thinking about this issue helps challenge parents to better see their two children as separate individuals. Parents need to consider that what is right for one child may not be right for the other. They need only ensure that each child's abilities and interests are looked at in the decision-making process as chores are assigned. ♥

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SEEING DOUBLE IN VEGAS

by Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 79TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL TWINS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION!

As they entered the casino, walking side-by-side and dressed completely alike from their hair clips down to their shoes, I couldn't help but notice all the people that were smiling, pointing and staring as this identical duo walked through the casino and headed to the meeting room. Then, another pair entered the casino and they were also dressed exactly alike from head to toe, their mannerisms were the same and their voices sounded identical while joyously greeting another set that had just arrived at the convention as old friends do.

Suddenly we were seeing 'double' in Vegas at every turn and everyone from the hotel staff to the general public loved seeing all these multiple multiples! It was fun to watch the reactions from people when a few 'sets' of twins gathered together. People would stop them and smile, take their pictures, ask questions about what it was like being twins and altogether treat them as if they were celebrities!

There is something very special about seeing this amazing and incredible bond each set shared and it was fun to see how they interacted with each other, too. Recently, my husband and I had the opportunity to attend the International Twins Association's 79th Annual convention that was held at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas over Labor Day weekend.

The International Twins Association was organized by and for twins in 1934. It is a non-profit, family-oriented organization that promotes the spiritual, intellectual, and social welfare of twins and multiples throughout the world. The first known reunion of twins was hosted in 1930 by Edward M. Clink and his twin sister, Elsie, of Silver Lake, Indiana with 13 sets of twins present from his congregation. The group became a national organization in 1934 and three years later they became an international organization and were incorporated.

The conventions were all held in northern Indiana during this period of time. Since 1939, the conventions have moved from city to city throughout the US. In 1980, traveling out of the US for the first time, the convention was held in Toronto, Canada. The group meets each year on Labor Day weekend at a different location which is selected by a vote of the members two years in advance.

On Friday, the group started their annual event by going bowling in the casino which many enjoyed. Then, later that evening there was a Kick-Off dinner & dance in the ballroom and a visit from the Mayor of Las Vegas who welcomed the group and proclaimed it "International Twins Day." It was fun to see so many twins and even a set of identical triplets (Cary, Chris and Charles Clark) with whom we had the pleasure of sitting at their table accompanied by their three lovely wives (Janet, Linda and Debbie). They are a super fun





group and are the Co-Secretaries/Treasurers of the organization. I really enjoyed hearing their "triplet" birth story, especially since their mom thought she was only pregnant with her 12th child (yes, I did say 12th this is not a typo!) but was certainly surprised when numbers 12, 13 and 14 arrived and these identical triplet boys became instant celebrities in their small town in Oklahoma.

On Saturday, the entire group went to the Hoover Dam during the day and then enjoyed a murder mystery dinner theater performance followed by a walk down Fremont Street to experience all the lights and glory of Vegas at night.

Sunday was their annual "Twins Contest" where I was asked to be one of their guest judges. Never judging a twins contest before, I had no idea the pressure and difficulty it would be selecting the "most look alike twins" and competition was thick. There were several categories for both men and women based on age and as the sets got older it got even harder to make our choices. Every single set that entered the contest wanted to win because that meant bragging rights for an entire year and they got to wear special medals for winning 1st and 2nd place. They all stared down at us while we had them face forward, turn to the side and face each other. We had to base our choices down to who was truly the most



identical and it was not easy. However, I had a fun time and truly enjoyed the experience and loved hanging out with all of these twins! Because I am not a twin but a "mother of twins" I proudly had photos of my 15-year-olds to share with everyone. I know my twins would have won "least look alike twins" hands down!

Sunday evening the group gathered in the ballroom once again for a Mardi gras themed dinner, dance and silent auction. One of the highlights was the hand-made mask competition and I was amazed and impressed at the colorful, feathered masks that were identical and worn proudly by each set that made one. There was also a talent show and a moving clogging performance by Russell Scott. Russell and his twin brother Ralph have attended many ITA

conventions and they were competitive cloggers and would often entertain the group on several occasions. Tragically, one year ago, Ralph was killed in a horrible 18-wheeler truck accident while driving for work and this was the first ITA convention Russell was attending without his identical twin, Ralph. The

room got very quiet when they showed a video of the two clogging from last year and there wasn't a dry eye in the room when Russell got up and clogged solo. You could just feel the weight of his loss in his solo performance and with every single set of twins that still had their co-twin sitting next to them. It was very moving and emotional and many people got up and showed Russell support with hugs and surrounded him with love when he was done.

It was a fun weekend for all that attended and the ages of twins ranged from age 2 all the way up to age 90! Moving forward, the group wants to plan fun activities that will attract younger twins and families to increase their outreach and membership and TWINS Magazine is proud to be their official Media Sponsor. In 2014 the convention will be held in Chicago and in 2015 they are going to Orlando---perfect for families with multiples to attend their annual Labor Day Weekend event! If you want to learn more about ITA you can visit their website at: <http://www.intltwins.org>. ♥





Which Hands

Do Your Twins Use?

by Dr. Nancy Segal

Twins come in two varieties: identical and fraternal—at least that's the accepted wisdom. However, the more researchers study twins, the more they're aware of the fascinating differences within and between twin types. In this regard, hand preference is an interesting characteristic. Approximately 25% of twins are opposite handed. Why? And what does it mean for other twin behavior?

The more researchers study twins, the more they're aware of the fascinating differences within and between twin types.

LEFT, RIGHT?

Most people are right-handed or left-handed and a minority is actually ambidextrous, which means they lack a clear preference for using either the left or right hand. Handedness can be classified not only with respect to type, but also with respect to degree (strong or weak). Strong right-handers prefer that right hands for most activities, while relatively weak right-handers may use the left hand for some tasks or, in some cases, may not have a clear hand preference.

Written questionnaires are commonly used to measure handedness. Individuals are asked to indicate which hand they favor for completing unimanual tasks, such as writing or brushing their teeth and bimanual tasks, such as threading a needle or hammering a nail. Responses are usually ordered along a continuum, such as always left, sometimes left, equal, sometimes right and always right. These questionnaires yield accurate information about hand preference and strength, but investigators should also try to directly observe individuals to be certain that the correct hand is recorded.

LEFT-HANDEDNESS IN THE FAMILY

For some time, researchers have been aware of the occurrence of left-handedness in some families with twins. Louise Carter-Saltzman, a University of Washington researcher, found that identical twinning is more frequent among the relatives of identical twins who showed mirror-imaging effects, such as hair whorl or dental patterns, as compared with the relatives of identical twins who did not show these reversals.



Twins showing mirror-imaging effects has lower birth weights than twins who didn't display such features. The birth weight difference was possibly explained by late splitting of the fertilized egg, an event that has been associated with left-handedness in identical twins.

Charles Boklage, an investigator at East Carolina University, found increased left-handedness among parents of both identical and fraternal twins, as compared with the parents' own same-sex siblings. He also suggested there may be a meaningful relationship between twinning and certain defects, such as facial clefting and congenital heart problems, among the relatives of some twin pairs. However, the specific factors linking all these things together are not yet well understood.

HANDS AND BRAIN STRUCTURE

Helmuth Steinmetz and his colleagues in the department of neurology and institute of general psychology at Heinrich-Heine University in the city of Dusseldorf, Germany, published a study of relationships between handedness and brain asymmetry in identical twins.

Brain asymmetry refers to whether or not the left and right structures of the human brain are the same size and shape and the same in the functions they perform. The researchers began by pointing out previous twin studies that looked at differences in identical twins' brain organization. Unfortunately, the measured features that could be modified by birth events or social influences yielded a murky picture. The researchers chose instead to measure the left and right sides (degree of asymmetry) of the planum temporale, an area of the brain that's related to language.

There's evidence from post-mortem studies of fetuses and newborns that their structure doesn't change after the 31st week of gestation. Therefore, it was very well suited to the purposes of this study. The findings are important because they suggest new reasons why genetically identical twins may show differences in their brain structure and possibly in their performance on some tasks.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Identical twins were recruited through announcements in newspapers. The final sample included 10 pairs of twins who used the right hand (RR) and 10 pairs of twins who were opposite-handed (RL). Identical pairs who were left-handed (LL) were not included. These pairs are actually quite rare.

The majority of pairs (16 out of 20 or 80%) were female. This is not unusual. Researchers are aware of the 'rule of two-thirds', described by David T. Lykken, which shows about two-thirds of most volunteer twin samples are female twins. In order to be certain that the twins were identical, pair members were compared across 27 different blood group constituents.

The probability of misclassifying twins by the method is minimal. The RR pairs ranged from 10 to 62 years old and the RL pairs ranged in age from 15 to 55 years old.

Handedness of the twins was determined by a hand dominance test where twins were requested to trace the lines, dot the circles and tap the squares.

They were classified as left or right-handed based on which hand proved more skillful. The left and right sides of the planum temporale were measured by the magnetic resonance technique that's able to produce images of the brain.

The right-handed twins from both RR pairs and RL pairs showed brain patterns similar to those found for right-handed non-twins (left asymmetry or larger left side of the planum temporale.)

The left-handed twins showed brain patterns similar to those found for left-handed non-twins (an absence of asymmetry).

Most interesting was that members of both RR twins and RL twins showed very little similarity to one another. This is certainly surprising because these twins are genetically identical. What could be the cause of this?

THE STUDY'S IMPLICATIONS

Investigators proposed ways in which splitting of the fertilized egg might occur that would explain their findings. It was first assumed that before splitting, the cells were already organized according to sidedness (left or right).

They then presented a fascinating series of diagrams suggesting for example, that depending on where the split occurs, some twins would be more alike than others in their brain structure. ♥



TWIN PEAKS (AND VALLEYS)

by Jeremy Greenberg

My wife and I have been slaves to our twin infant boys for eight glorious weeks (at the time this essay's being written). We feel extremely blessed—that is, when we don't feel extremely exhausted.

The twins already seem to have a natural rivalry. If one spits up a little, the other will spit up a lot. If one cries for twenty minutes, the other will go for an hour. I believe that down the road, this competition will drive them toward success, both academically and athletical-

ly. But as it is now, they're both fierce contenders in a game of "Break Daddy's Will."

My wife, it should be known, seems born to parent. She's got the patience of a saint. Plus, when it comes to soothing a crying baby, she's got nipples and isn't afraid to use them. But when I'm on duty, I have no such silence-invoking endowments. So I've developed three techniques to stop a baby from crying—none of which work. I'll share them with you, so that when your twin infants inconsolably lament their existence, you too can fail to soothe.

For starters, if your babies appear to have gas, I recommend the Berlin Airlift. Hold a baby with one hand under the butt, with the other supporting the neck, and evenly swing him or her up and down, and in a circle, as though you're on the Dumbo ride at Disneyland (and be

thankful you aren't Dumbo—with all the crying, the last thing you'd want are bigger ears). This will usually quiet the baby, until you stop the Airlift—at which time he'll go back to crying like a Wall Streeter who's bet his fortune on mortgage-backed securities.

Next, for those times when it's 3 AM, and you have no idea why your baby's crying, I recommend doing the Soiled Swinging

Serenade. The key to this technique is that after singing songs and attempting to soothe the baby by placing it in its rocker or baby seat, or cuddling it as you rock in a chair, you must finally realize that the reason why he or she's crying is because of a dirty diaper. Hopefully, you'll only have to do the Soiled Swinging Serenade once.

Finally, when all hope is lost, use the Midnight Snack. This is when you say "Screw it" and bottle-feed them a hefty dose of either breast milk or formula, in an attempt to make your baby feel the lethargy that adults only experience following Thanksgiving meals. But be careful to ALWAYS burp your baby following the Midnight Snack, or it'll quickly turn into the Midnight Yack.

Fortunately, something recently happened which reminded me of the joy these children will bring: one of the twins projectile-crapped on my dog in the middle of a diaper change.

I'm not sure how it is for other men. What the moment is when they realize that what they may have initially feared would be the end of life as they knew it, is actually just the beginning of a richer, more fulfilling life. I had always imagined that this would occur the first time they looked into my eyes and didn't spit up. I'd thought that I'd be overwhelmed with emotion the first time they smiled—even if the smile was only due to gas. But life isn't that simple. There was just something about the unconscious act of fecal aggression towards my Australian Cattle Dog Dagny that somehow made me think, "That's my boy."

I am somewhat embarrassed to admit this. One can only imagine how a reader interprets or judges this sort of twisted pride. But I actually think that the explanation is quite beautiful. You see, although I'm in my thirties, I'm very young at heart (that's a nice way of saying I'm immature). Comedy keeps me young, and I think part of the fear of having children, to men like me, is that the responsibility of parenting will divorce them from the youthful, sophomore parts of their identity. We fear that the part of ourselves that loves watching South Park is going to be permanently replaced by a guy who demands that during dinner, all elbows be kept off the table. We dread becoming the guys who are so fed up with their kids' antics that they become humorless disciplinarians. We shudder at the thought of suddenly yelling, "Knock it off. That's not funny!" Then we would look around the room asking, "Dad, is that you?"

But then, when Dagny walked over to the changing table with her canine nose high in the air at just the right time, I realized that I've got nothing to fear. If anything, life with kids will be even more full of moments that cause my wife to roll her eyes. Having kids won't be all work and no play. And although there will be times when I can't laugh, so as not to encourage bad behavior, I'll never truly lose my sophomore identity. If anything, I'll just outsource it to my children. ♥

Jeremy Greenberg

is an internationally headlining comedian, a blogger for Pregnancy and Newborn Magazine, and the author of the forthcoming book *Relative Discomfort: The Family Survival Guide* (Andrews McMeel). Learn more at www.relativediscomfort.com or www.jeremygreenberg.com.



by Lina Osmundson

Twins *as* Twins

When my twin sister and I were cast as the two narrators in the summer play, "Twinderella" at the Northglenn Colorado Youth Theatre, we were ecstatic. Shocked, surprised, and a little nervous, yes - but all around excited to be a part of our very first production. And what better show than that of twins, pairs, and doubles?

"Twinderella" is a lively production featuring not only Cinderella, but her long-lost twin brother, and their wacky journey of finding one another while many other pairs are weaved throughout the story. Evil stepsisters, evil stepbrothers, fairy godmother and fairy godfather, prince and princess, king and queen... these are just a few of the duos of the show.

Our characters - literally named "Narrator #1" and "Narrator #2" - acted as the directors of the show, easing the story onward with impatient scenes and hilarious dialogue. Although the cast description never specified, it

just made sense to place actual twins as the two narrators of the show - the perfect twist of irony to "Twinderella".

And yet, as twins, I couldn't help but feel a little injustice.

In the acting world, sometimes it's not all about talent, but the appearance as well. With this particular show, look-alikes were needed everywhere - which is why I feel my sister and I were given a bit of a leg up.

As grateful and excited as I was for receiving a part, a bit of sadness tugged at my heart, too. Did we really both deserve our characters? Or were we both chosen because the director didn't want to let one of us down, and not the other? This has been the common struggle of twin-ship; we are constantly together, and



not just in a literal sense. It seems as if society has deemed that we both need to be chosen for something, or not at all, even if one has more talent than the other. All my life this scenario has been reenacted consistently as my sister and I have grown up together.

So, after the initial happiness of receiving a part, this thought led to the familiar experience of disappointment and resentment. We hadn't been chosen for our talent, no; we'd been chosen out of pity for our twin relationship... once again.

However, our first rehearsal - and my own personal first drama rehearsal ever attended - proved to be one of the most enjoyable and hilarious experiences of my young life, as well as all the rehearsals that followed. Blocking, costume fittings, 80's dancing - these are several aspects of the play about to be set forth onto the eyes and ears of our very first audience.

As these attributes gradually advanced into full scenes and acts, I realized the truth about my twin and I. We weren't chosen out of pity; we'd been chosen for the hard work and dedication we spent trying again and again to improve in acting, chosen for our love of being on stage for just that first time. Yes, being twins probably helped; but that didn't matter, because we deserved our parts, which happened to be stellar opposites yet with a touch of similarity. This is what the director had seen in us; our contrasting spirit, not our identical looks.

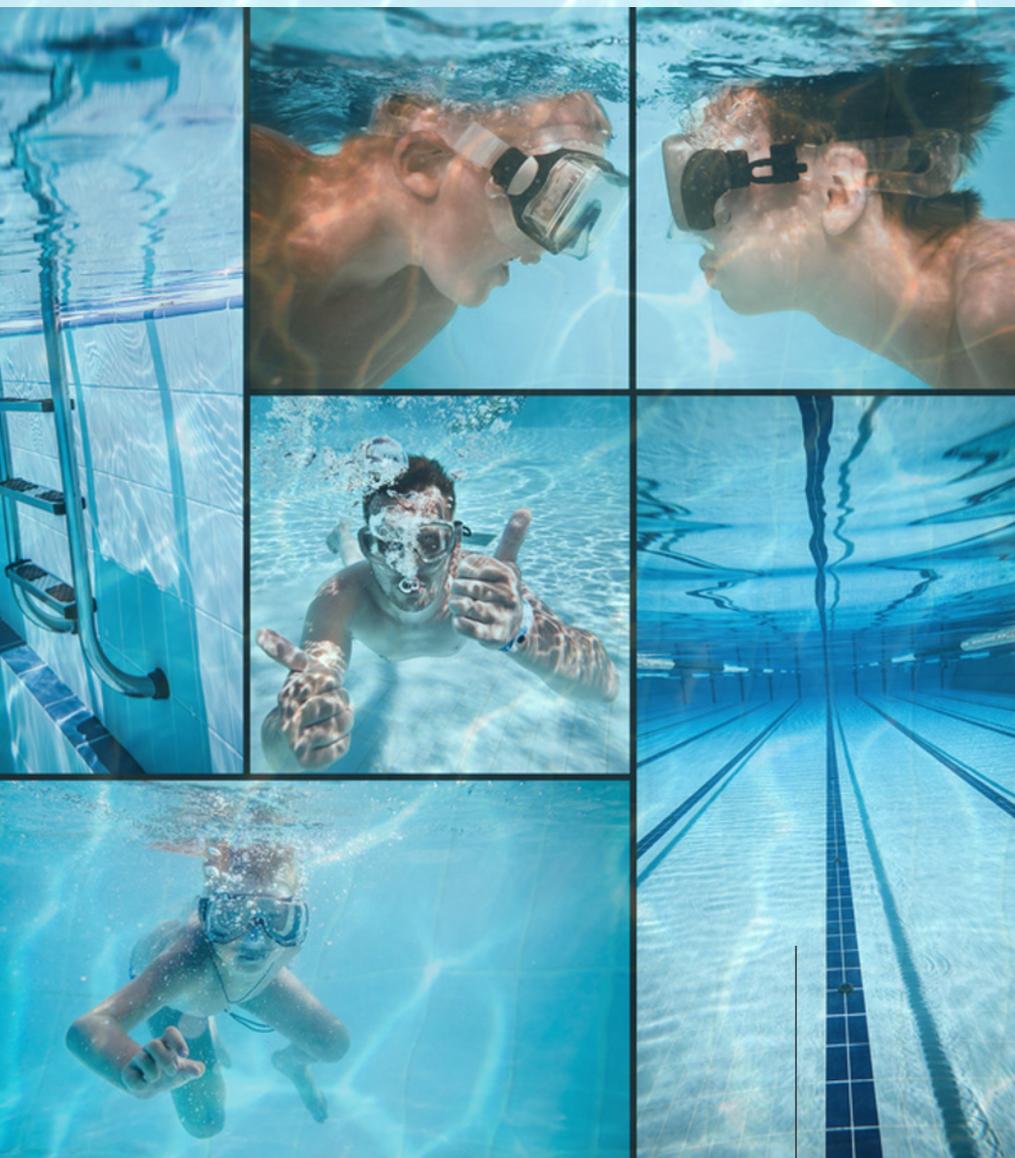
And truth be told, I loved acting with my twin. She's a wonderful actress, and if she hadn't been up on that stage beside me wearing that goofy 80's dress with neon pink tights, it just wouldn't have been the same. ♥



Be a Good Sport and Let Me Win

When Twins Play Sports Together

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof



When we arrived at the swim meet, my boys immediately jumped in the water to warm up while I scanned the roster of the day's events. Medley relay, butterfly, backstroke—check. Then I stopped. Not only were my fraternal twins both swimming in the 50 meter freestyle—we were used to that—but their seed times were so close that the league put them in the same heat, and in lanes right next to each other. Talk about head-to-head competition. What were we gearing up for?

When you mix school-age twins and sports, sometimes you create moments worthy of a tearful Hallmark card as each child cheers the other on. Unfortunately, other times their interaction in the sports arena resembles a wrestling match as each tries to dominate his co-twin. It's just the nature of the beast when you have two kids who are the same age with similar interests and abilities.

Kathy Hird of Fort Collins, CO can relate. Her ten-year-old identical twin boys having been playing on the same soccer team for several years. Although her sons often encourage each other, it's not always the case. "When one twin performs better than the other, we encourage good sportsmanship and ask that he not gloat," she says. "But typically the winner gloats a little while pretending to support his brother. Deep down they both want the other to do well but also want him to come in second!"

So should parents steer their twins in opposite directions when it comes to playing sports? Will it be better for their individual growth and relationship if they compete in

different athletics? Maybe, maybe not, according to sports psychologist and licensed therapist Joel Fish. "The relationship and the personalities of the twins are key factors," he says. The father of boy-girl twins as well as a singleton and the author of *101 Ways to Be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making Athletics a Positive Experience For Your Child* (Fireside; 2003), Fish believes parents need to look not only at the twin bond and how competitive they are but also at their emotional maturity and skill levels.

"In my clinical experience, the identical twin relationship is more intense and it can come out either in them wanting to do the same sports even in high school to having more difficulty being on the same team with one having more recognition than the other," he explains.

According to Fish, it can be a bit easier for boy-girl twins to compete on the same team. "Identity formation is a key challenge for young twins. Children want to answer, 'Who am I? How adequate am I?' And I think that when they are a different sex, they have a different starting point to answer those questions," he says. For boy-girl twins, those questions are easier to answer since they aren't constantly asked in relation to each other. And it's that difference in identity formation that translates to better cooperation on the same field.

Michelle Dowell of Fargo, ND says her six-year-old boy-girl twins are awesome T-ball teammates. "They encourage each other all the time," she says. "I never deal with them being jealous of each other."

WHAT ABOUT SIBLING RIVALRY?

Letizia Ripandelli of Ontario, Canada says she let the soccer coach decide to place her six-year-old identical twin boys on the same soccer team. Like many monozygotic twins, Luigi and Umberto are well matched in ability as well as in size and weight. "It's difficult to tell them apart on the field from the way they play," she says. From her point of view, playing on the same team has kept her sons' rivalry to a minimum. "They're competitive boys and if they were on opposite teams they would not rejoice quite so much if their brother was doing better."

Yet according to Fish, when it comes to twins, parents don't always need to equal the playing field. "Parents are quick to squash that sibling rivalry especially around sports be-

cause it's so uncomfortable and there are so many fears of how it's going to play out," he says. "Sometimes it's a natural sibling rivalry that can't really be squashed and instead goes underground." Fish advises parents to instead set some boundaries of the right and wrong ways to handle these feelings of jealousy. "You have to acknowledge it and normalize the sibling rivalry," he says.

If your twins are having difficulty competing together in sports, try to say something like, "I understand that you're upset that Johnny made the team but you didn't. But it's not OK for you to hit him or hide his glove. What you need to do is to talk to Mom or Dad about it and we'll decide the best way to handle that feeling."

LEARNING TO BE A GOOD SPORT

Yet it's a two-way street, according to Fish. "Parents have to look at both sides. The achiever needs to show it in a gracious way as opposed to a put-down," he says. "For the child who didn't achieve, parents need to give that child permission to feel upset, angry, and jealous but learn how to express it." Win or lose, there's always an opportunity for parents to help their twins mature emotionally.

Brenda Grinnell's ten-year-old fraternal twin boys have long recognized their differing abilities. Both her boys played on the same basketball team this past season but one was more able in the sport than his co-twin. "They did support each other, sometimes better than other times," explains the La Crescenta, CA mom. "We do emphasize good sportsmanship over victory without lessening the competitive edge. It's not easy and does create a lot of tears but that's what we're working towards," she adds. "Growth—both physical and mental—is never easy but it's an exciting process."

LOGISTICS HAVE THEIR PLACE

For many families with twins, having their children play on the same team just makes more sense. Jan Bentley of Buckeye, AZ, says having her seven-year-old fraternal girls play on the same soccer team was a no-brainer. "If they had been on different teams, they would have had different practice days and different games times," she explains. "I wanted to be able to watch them equally and not have to be in two places at the same time."

Other parents agree. With family time so precious, no one wants to be the afternoon taxi driver. "It's easier to manage for me especially being a single mom working full time," adds Jyll Petro of Waterbury, CT, whose five-year-old identical boys play soccer together, too.

Although logistics and cost should be part of the decision-making process when it comes to picking sports for your twins, it shouldn't be the only factors. "Parents should look at what makes the most sense this year for their children and then re-visit that decision again the next sports season," Fish cautions. "I encourage parents to be honest with all the factors and figure out what's in the best interest of the children."

That's the conclusion that the Brady family of Fort Collins, CO came to. For years, ten-year-old fraternal twins Tucker and Keegan played on the same soccer team because it was easier. But once Tucker was diagnosed with Cold Induced Asthma, the family decided to switch him to an indoor sport that dealt more with upper-body strength. "Gymnastics seemed like the logical choice. He's thrived in this environment and has had many accomplishments and made many new friends," says mom Robyn.

As an added bonus, both boys have had a chance to tap into their own identities, free of comparisons from outsiders. "Many of their teammates didn't even know they were twins until one twin showed up at a game," Brady adds. "The boys are proud to be in different activities and tell everyone about it."

TAKE YOUR CUES FROM YOUR KIDS

So what happened at my sons' swim meet? Neither boy seemed to notice going head-to-head and I didn't bother to call their attention to it either. I think I was more concerned with the issue than they were. Yet to my surprise, I found it easy to cheer for both boys at the same time. I didn't care who won or lost, I just wanted to see a great race. And I did.

Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 17-year-old fraternal twins and a 14-year-old singleton. She's also the author of 'Parenting School-Age Twins' and 'Multiples and Double Duty: The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins', available from the TWINS™ Magazine Parenting Bookshelf. Christina's website is www.talk-about-twins.com.

HALLOWEEN

E-U-N!

9 TRICKS FOR HALLOWEEN SAFETY

by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson



Hazards can be avoided on Halloween by taking the following precautions:

Adults or older children should accompany young ghosts and goblins on their hauntings.

Light-reflecting costumes or orange reflecting tape will insure no one is mistaken for the invisible man. Flashlights can also brighten the path.

Look both ways before crossing the street and obey all traffic safety rules. Walk, don't run, to avoid fractures to little skeletons.

October can be cold and damp; find a flame-retardant costume that provides protection from the weather.

Work your own neighborhood. There will be fewer tricks among the treats from people you know.

Eyes work best when not blocked by masks. Paint and makeup can create great effects.

Every piece of candy should be checked by a parent for tampering. Throw away all unpackaged goodies including cookies and apples.

Never go trick or treating alone, always say thank you.

Make Easy Frankencups!

Draw faces on cups with a black Sharpie. Add vanilla pudding tinted with green food coloring. Crush some Oreo's to sprinkle on top of the pudding and there you go, fun and easy Frankencups!



Make Halloween Skeleton Mouths

What's creepier than a decrepit skeleton mouth? Not much. For those of us who want to push a little nutrition on the kiddos come Halloween night, this easy mix of apple slices, peanut butter and mini marshmallows will do the trick. In fact, you can scare your kids even more by telling them their teeth will look like this if they eat too much Halloween candy... EEK!



Make Halloween S'Mores!

Place unwrapped chocolate bar atop a graham square. Top with Halloween peep and second graham square. Microwave 10 seconds and enjoy!

Mummified Milk Chocolate

Here's a super easy and fun idea... Glue a couple of googly eyes onto a chocolate bar, then wrap each bar in a thin white streamer paper.





Easy Paper Plate Ghosts

Supplies:

- 2-3 white paper plates
- white tissue paper
- white string or yarn
- scissors
- glue or tape
- Sharpie marker
- pencil

Steps:

1. Using a pencil, draw eyes and a mouth onto one of the plates.
2. Trace the face with a black marker. Then color it in.
3. Trace your child's hands onto the center of a plate (use two plates if necessary). NOTE: You could use construction paper instead.
4. Cut out the hands and attach them to the back of the ghost plate.
5. Fold the tissue paper over a few times, then cut it into strips about 1-2 inches wide.
6. Attach the strips of tissue paper to the back of the ghost plate, so that they hang down from the bottom.
7. Punch a hole in the top of the ghost and thread a piece of string or yarn through the hole to hang it.



Source: ThriftyFun.com.

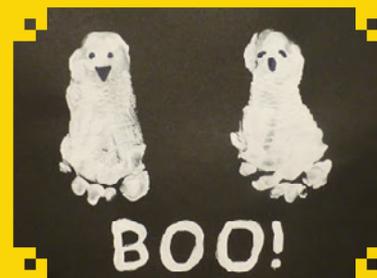
Easy Halloween Crafts for Toddlers

Here is a super easy crafts with a Halloween theme - this is perfect for toddlers as it is quick to do and look really effective!

Footprint Ghosts

Paint each child's foot with white paint and then make prints onto black cardstock.

Then add your details - so easy!



Source: <http://craftulate.blogspot.ca/2013/09/6-super-easy-halloween-crafts-for.html>



How to Adjust to Life with Twins Plus One!



Parents of multiples can and will extol to any available ear the perks and plusses delivered with a package marked “Twins.” “They are each other’s best friends,” we hear parents gush about their two-some. “They go through everything together.” “They’ll always have each other.”

We parents are proud because our little duos do indeed share a special, almost magical, connection with one another. We have observed them play together – almost mind-reading their look-alike siblings’ thoughts and moves and acting accordingly. My own twins, Hunter and Peyton, shared a unique little language when they were toddlers. Now that they are 10-years-old, they laugh when I tell them that when they were two, they used to look at each other and say, “Da doo bee on!” and just crack up. Only they knew what this secret word meant, and I was enamored by their cute vocabulary.

When I had my third child, Lucas, I assumed that he would just blend in with my twin boys and become “one of the gang.” I didn’t realize, and I still have to remind myself, that a third or fourth child beyond “twindom” requires some flexing of the parental muscles.

A new child in the home raises numerous issues with any parent. When Lucas became old enough to walk and talk, he did what any little brother would do: he followed Hunter and Peyton around incessantly and insisted on playing with whatever they were playing. I quickly began to realize that my twins’ close relationship was often a cause for Lucas to feel left out. My twins have always been in-tune with one another and don’t rely on a lot of verbal communication when they play. Lucas, on the other hand, is very communicative. He was and still is often put-out by his siblings’ lack of banter and attentiveness.

These differences in personalities alone are enough to cause sibling friction; add that to the third-wheel phenomenon and my family situation necessitated a parenting upgrade. Like any parent, I’m always learning about my kids’ different personalities and wondering how to create a tolerably peaceful home. Here’s some advice – learned the hard way – for parents challenged with multiples plus one (or more):

Foster individual attention. Lucas, for better or worse, loves being the center of attention. He thrives when my husband or I take the time to spend moments with only him: we get ice cream, go on a bike ride, or read a book just with him. It’s a good idea for any parent to carve out quality time with each child, and it’s important for siblings of twins to feel special and valued by their parents.

Have play dates and encourage hobbies. I make sure each boy attends birthday parties or play dates so that he can feel like he is a valued friend to others his age. Having his own set of friends allows a child to develop bonding relationships outside the home. In addition, Lucas, like his brothers and every child, has unique likes and interests. I try to nurture his individuality by encouraging hobbies that he enjoys. For instance, Lucas enjoys working on the computer, so my husband went to great lengths to find an affordable refurbished laptop to give him for his birthday.

Teach your children how to behave. Sibling rivalry is inevitable in families with more than one child. Rather than yelling at my twins for excluding their younger brother, I’ve learned to ask encouraging questions like, “Hey, wouldn’t this be more fun if your brother helped you?” or “How would you feel if you were left out of the game?” or “Isn’t it better when we all play together?”

Set an example. This is an ongoing and very challenging aspect to being a parent. We must model the behavior we hope to see in our children. If we treat each other fairly and respectfully and make sure

we include others in our conversations and activities, our children will follow suit. If we make every effort to encourage loving relations within our homes, our children will feel loved and secure, no matter their birthright.

Remind your children of the special relationship siblings share. In the midst of a raging battle over building blocks or an especially high-pitched tattle-telling session, sometimes it’s best to sit everyone down and remind them all of how wonderful it is to be family. (Sounds corny, I know.) If a sibling rivalry situation is out of hand, I have discovered that taking sides is like fanning a fire. Instead, we all sit down, calm down, and I ask each child, “Why do you love your brother?” The boys are not allowed to get up and play until they’ve answered my question. Of course, a boy will immediately respond, “I don’t love him – he stole my light saber!” But I keep asking until they come up with a reasonably earnest answer. The whole conversation usually ends in giggles. Also, I make everyone apologize for fighting.

Relax. I’ve realized that no matter how careful and strict I am about fairness, my family is rarely perfectly equitable, and I am far from being a perfect parent. Sometimes life is just unfair – it will always seem like one person has more or gets more than another – and that’s a reality all children must learn to live with. Lucas will always be a sibling to his twin brothers; at the same time, he will one day be a young man taking responsibility for his own actions.

I’m sure that whatever we do (or don’t do) as parents, our children will naturally love and cherish each other. No matter their birth order, my boys, like your children, equally share the perks and plusses of the best bond of all: family.

Luci L. Creery lives in the small town of Globe, Arizona, where she is a writing teacher, a private tutor, and, most importantly, a mother of four busy boys and one lovely daughter.



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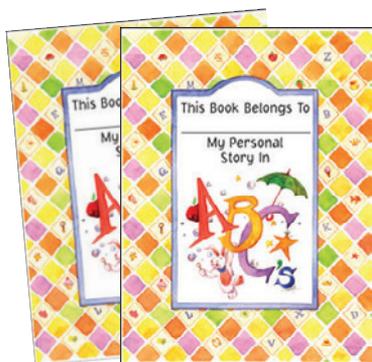
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Twins Growth Chart

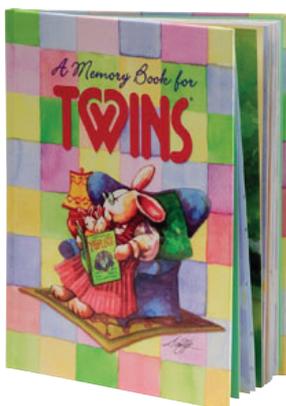


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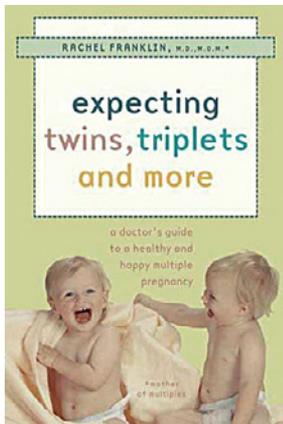
Girl / Girl Twin Story Packet



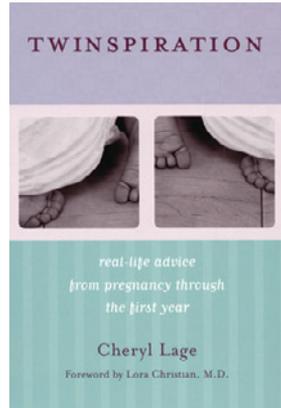
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Boy / Girl Twin Story Packet

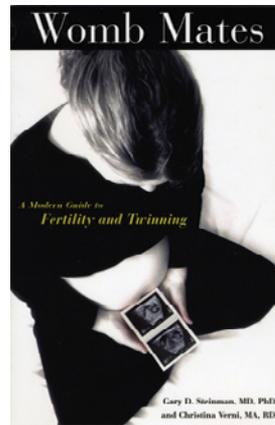
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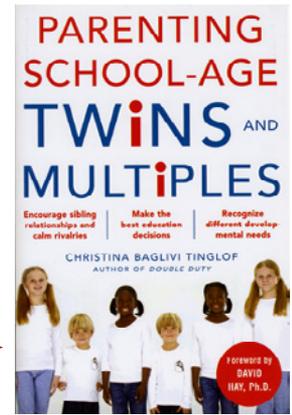
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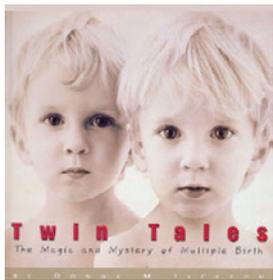
Twinspiration



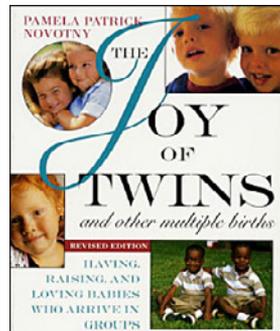
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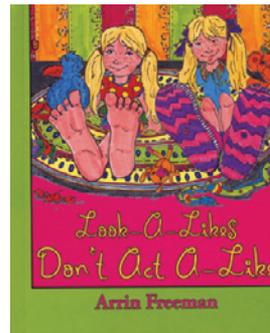
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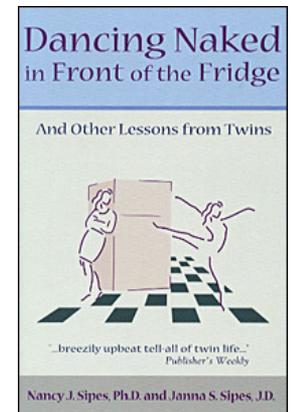
Twin Tales



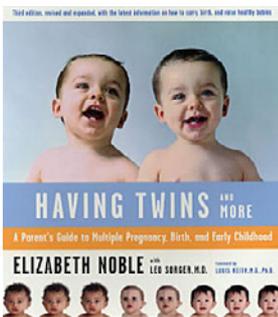
The Joy of Twins and Other Multiple Births



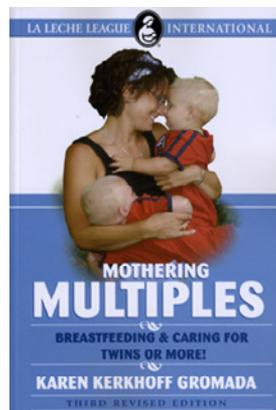
Look-a-Likes Don't Act-a-Like



Dancing Naked in Front of the Fridge



Having Twins and More

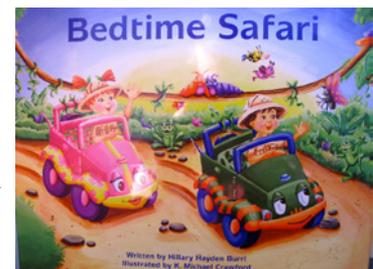


Mothering Multiples



Two Times the Fun

Bedtime Safari



Double Takes



Alexander & Zachary
Age 13-months—ID
Bethlehem, PA



Stella & Grant
Age 8.5 months—FR
Albany, NY



Kaylee & Miley
Age 2—ID
Bay City, MI



Uriah & Malek
Age 10-months in photo (now 21-mos)
Bradford, PA



David & Larissa
Age 11—FR
Warminster, PA



Isabella & Olivia
Age 1 —FR
Englishtown, NJ

September/October 2013



Colin & Aiden
Age 5—ID
Monroe, MI



Molly & Noah
Age 4-months in this pic
(now 15-mos)—FR
Senoia, GA



Hayden & Avery
Age 13 months in photo
(now 3)—FR
Dayton Ohio



Zachary and Ethan Mathews
Age 3-months—FR
Sarasota, FL



Adam & Maysam
Age 2—FR
Kingdom of Bahrain—
The Persian Gulf



Samantha & Alexandra
Age 4—FR
Nampa, ID



Carson & Cash
Age 1 week in photo
(now 4)—FR
Lakeland, FL



Simon & Sofia
Age 9 —FR
Vienna, WV



Kylee & Kenlee
Age 3 —ID
Gainesville, FL



Declan & Teague
Age 4-months—FR
Denver, CO



Ezekiel & Kaelyn
Age 8-months in photo
(now 3)—FR
Avon Park, FL



Jacqueline & Mackenzie
Age 5 ½—ID
Mineola, New York

Double Takes • September/October 2013



Alexander & Victor
Age 3 ½ —ID
Danmark, North Europe



Spencer & Marley
Age 7 months in photo
(now 3 ½)—FR
Enid, OK



Amelia Ann & Caroline Renee
Age 4-months in photo—ID
Hays, Kansas



Evan & Ian
Age 1 in photo
(now almost 2)—FR
Farmington Hills, MI



Joseph Martin & Olivia Rose
Age 1 week in photo
(now 3-mos)—FR
New Hartford, NY



Clair & Olivia
Age 16-months in photo
(now 26-months)—FR
Round Lake, IL



Jackson Cash & Travis Wynn
Age 5 months in photo—ID
Simi Valley, CA



Aubrey & Elliott
Age 10-months—FR
Charlotte, MI



Kylie & Kassidie
Age 1 in photo (now 2)—ID
Calimesa, CA



Andrew & Adrian
Age 9-months—FR
Roswell, NM



Bella Vincenza & Michael Vito
Age 1 in photo
(now 4)—FR
Staten Island, NY



Brielle Faith & Brooklynn Rose
Age 5-months in photo—FR
Fort Worth, TX



SPIDERMAN

by Laurie Ford

My boys' names are Dominic and Zachary. They will be turning three on October 11. The two's – well not so terrible but very interesting. We used a lot of tested and familiar phrases such as "you are getting a time out," "please share," "no, you cannot have candy for breakfast," and "you can only have one," more times than I can count.

Last year for Halloween my boys wanted to be Spiderman. I think the only interaction they had with Spiderman was with the sippy cups we got at the dollar store in a pinch, and ever since they asked me who was on that cup, they were hooked.

So we got them, well, their grandmas bought them a Spiderman costume for Halloween last year. These costumes weren't the kind you find at the local drugstore. These costumes were the expensive kind that you find from one of those costume magazines. The kind that most parents, particularly parents of twins, toss in the garbage with the thought "it's just for one day."

But show that same catalog to a grandparent, especially the grandparent whose first grandchildren are twins, the next thing you hear is "I'll buy the costumes," and the other grandma jumps in "I'll be one of them too," and there we have it. Including gloves and masks and not to

mention the shipping of these foam-muscle Spiderman we are talking a \$75.00 per costume price tag.

Now even though I didn't spend a dime on these costumes I feel since I am a stay-at-home mom, who can't sew or paint or do anything even remotely crafty, it is part of my duty to try and find as many ways as I can to save money. My big question this time is... can I talk the two-year-olds (soon to be three) into being Spiderman again this year? I mean let's face it; this is the only year I have a shot at repeating costumes. Once your twins are in pre-school you have no shot of it happening, particularly, as I have been told, if you are dealing with girls.

Now here's my plan. I'll have to talk them into having a Spiderman themed birthday party. Last year my very vocal sons chose Curious George, which of course was fine. But this year I'll have to pull some mommy magic and tell them how cool it would be to go as Spiderman without reminding them that was their costume last year. Or that it would be cool to go again as Spiderman whatever seems to get their attention better. This may prove to be a little tricky however. Since nothing and I mean nothing gets past these two kids.

They remember the kids' names at our park district classes better than I do, what if somehow another two-year-old has already told them

that you usually don't repeat costumes, that it's somehow not cool. OK, so maybe I'm being a little silly but you never can tell. Let me share a little story. One day I heard them telling each other "get out of my sight," "get out of my sight," back and forth and laughing so hard like it was the most clever thing they'd ever heard and at the age of two it was probably the case. Horrified, I calmly asked them "Where did you hear that phrase?" In unison they responded "pa." Now my father is recently retired and is playing silly games with the boys such as snowball fight with soft sponge balls and "hide" as they like to call it.

That being said, I found that "pa," being the answer to my question was very believable and very probable. I told them that this was not a nice thing to say. I'll talk to "pa" when he comes over tomorrow. I should also mention that they add the word "little" when talking about my dad as in "little pa," He is about 5' 2." They have also begun calling my husband's father "big pa" as he is about 6'1." All parties are perfectly happy with how they're being described. When my parents come over the next day half-jokingly I say to my dad, the boys told me that you taught them the phrase "get out of my sight" and my dad says, "I did?" "That's what they said," I respond. My dad denies it and I have a hard time believing his denial as it

is just like my father to forget half the things he says. So, we all move on and let it go.

My parents stayed for dinner that night and we started to watch Shrek. Shrek is one of their favorite movies that out of exhaustion I popped in one Friday after a three-day bout of colds and flu that ran through each of us.

That being said my boys don't sit still for very long and do not watch very much television so we watch the abridged version. This consists of the first twenty minutes, ten minutes in the middle and the last fifteen minutes. We avoid the scary parts or what I deem slightly inappropriate for two-year-olds.

As we are all watching I suddenly hear one of the soldiers say, "Get out of my sight," mystery solved. Little pa redeemed himself and the little boys couldn't stop laughing, actually none of us could. I guess I can't filter everything the boys see and hear. Well, I'm sure you saw this coming but the boys have decided they want to be Shrek for Halloween this year. I still have some time to convince them otherwise. In the meantime, I think I'll either mention to grandma what the boys want to be for Halloween, or maybe I should learn how to sew. ♥



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