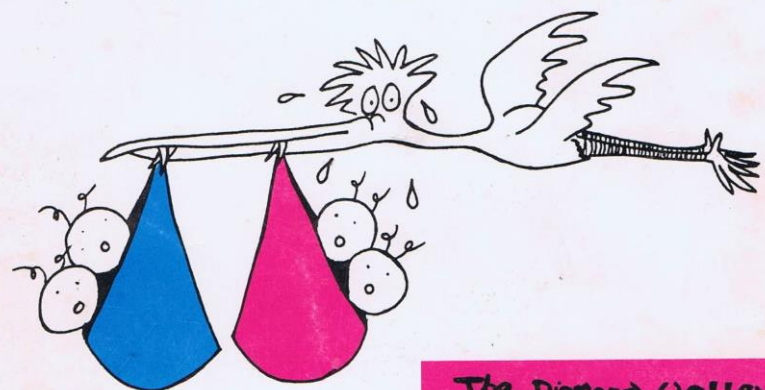


\$2.00

# Multiple Choices!



The Diamond VALLEY  
Parents of TWINS PLUS  
Club Inc.

A Guide To Managing Multiples  
Pregnancy To Eighteen Months

Lynda Johnston

\* Linda Court



THE ARTICLES IN THIS BOOK HAVE BEEN WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL MULTIPLE FAMILIES IN MIND. THE ARTICLES ARE MEMBERS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND ARE INTENDED AS A GUIDE ONLY.

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All enquiries regarding our Club can be directed to  
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## INTRODUCTION

After many months work, here is a book brimming with articles especially written by Club members, dealing with multiples in the age-group 'pregnancy to eighteen months'. It is a dedicated effort to help at a time when you most need it.

Due to an unprecedented influx of multiple families (due most probably to a greater awareness of Clubs such as ours), we are surrounded by people who crave practical advice and support. Our determination to offer practical help in an easily obtainable written form has been the driving force behind the completion of 'Multiple Choices'.

Our original aim was to be able to 'offer' a BOOKLET to new and prospective parents of multiples. However, as the quality and quantity of club contributions exceeded our expectations, it seemed logical (and indeed necessary) to expand our original idea. Our Club has always been actively involved in providing a close support network for all members and this project is one of a number of ways our Club can help.

Dealing with two or three babies at one time poses 'different' problems which are known to cause a high level of physical and emotional stress in families. Often, new parents feel alone and confused about their multiple birth. We have included a wide spectrum of possibilities and situations in this book, in the hope that you may find some articles you can relate to. We have also included suggestions and handy hints on such routine chores as housework and shopping because after all, when you're taking care of two or more babies as well, these chores sometimes become insurmountable barriers.

Enthusiasm for the book seemed to travel far and wide as we even received a contribution from a former member now living in Canberra. It is that sort of enthusiasm that made the book such a joy to work on. We would like to thank all members for their time and perseverance in writing articles. We would also like to thank all those other members who in some way left their mark to help those around them.

Our Club is extremely fortunate to have members who are willing to offer their 'specialist' skills to help Diamond Valley achieve its very best. In this regard, we would sincerely like to thank Mr. Kent Silfo for his expertise and time with artwork adding that 'special touch', Mr. Randy Boyce for proofing the draft and to Mr. Glenn Murray for his expertise in printing and designing our book. Glenn has been most helpful and understanding of our aims.

Diamond Valley is proud of this achievement and special thanks must go to all 'sub-committee' members who worked tirelessly and enthusiastically. There are many aspects to creating a book, and all sub-committee members worked happily through all teething problems. Special thanks to Rae Cummings for her work in obtaining a grant.

In conclusion, may we take this opportunity to invite new and prospective families to our Club's activities to meet our members.

Happy reading and dare we say, this book was conceived and born just for you.

*Linda Court, Rae Cummings,  
Ann Boyce, Nan Caple, Helen Steele,  
Lynda Johnston, Jeanette Flint  
and Dianne Johnston.*

## MY PREGNANCY

I found that being pregnant with twins was VERY uncomfortable. My uterus was full term in size at 29 weeks. Obstetrically, my pregnancy was considered excellent however, I was glad to have the babies out and in my arms. The babies are well worth all the discomfort and I would go through it again if given the chance.

## LABOUR & DELIVERY

With my first two pregnancies I had delivered in a birth centre and returned home within 24 hours. I hoped with my twins that if they were healthy and close to term, I could have a minimal interference delivery and early discharge so I chose a doctor with this understanding. At my 38 week checkup, I weighed in one kilo lighter than the previous week and as my doctor firmly believed that there would be no benefit to babies in my pregnancy continuing beyond 38 weeks and perhaps to their detriment, we agreed that if I had not delivered by 39 weeks, I would be induced. That date arrived and I was still in one large uncomfortable piece, so we arrived and an examination found me to be 4cm dilated. The water of the first baby was broken, however, no drip was needed at this stage and labour became established. The doctor then set up an IV of glucose solution so it would be in place if needed (for example, if the second twin needed assistance in arriving or post-partum haemorrhage which is more common after twins). This was one measure the doctor did insist was necessary. I used the gas mask for a good hour, something I had not needed with my previous single pregnancy and delivered both babies head first, 2910g and 2430g and for the first time without stitches being needed, even though twin one had a large head. We were all glad we hadn't let the pregnancy go any longer as their



estimated weights three weeks earlier by ultrasound were the same as their birth weights.

I fed on the delivery table both twin style and individually and their proud dad gave them a Leboyer style bath. I headed home 18 hours after delivery and I have been happy with that decision.

*Jeanette Flint*

## A TWIN SURPRISE

"Randy", I whispered, "I think my waters have broken". I was shaking uncontrollably as I'd just spent 10 minutes on the loo wondering when I was going to stop, dressed in absolutely nothing on one of the bitterest nights we'd had so far. I was also only 30 weeks pregnant, carrying twins and not quite believing what was happening as I'd just attended my 6th Childbirth class that evening!

Randy jumped out of bed and dialled the Royal Womens. "What does it smell like?" he yelled out. In our shaken states we still collapsed with laughter. I don't know what he told the sister on the phone but the next minute we were tootling down the freeway at 85 m.p.h.

All was calm at the hospital as they connected me to the foetal heart monitor and found the 2 babies' heart beats. "Can you feel that contraction?" they asked. I couldn't and didn't want to as my babies were far too little to be born now! "We've called your doctor and he'll come in early tomorrow morning". I was thinking how much he'd love a 2 a.m. phone call.

I woke up early the next morning in the pre-delivery room without a toothbrush, hairbrush, nightie, etc. I hadn't packed my hospital bag. It was far too early! After the doctor's visit I was connected to a drip containing ventolin which relaxes the uterus muscle and stops contractions. After a day I progressed to the ventolin in tablet form and was taken to the antenatal ward.

My contractions were held off for 5 days but then my babies wanted to come! Off to the delivery ward again, onto the foetal heart monitor which detected regular 3-5 minute contractions. They still only felt like period pains in the lower back.

My doctor had his pleasant Sunday evening interrupted but still came in smiling. "You have to go for it this time" he explained. I was 5 cm dilated and was full swing into labour. I'd had 5 days to become used to the idea of prematurity and read the excellent book written by the hospital's doctors. I was worried about the twins but realised that 31 weeks was not considered critical by hospital terms.

My contractions swung along to the tune of Sunday solid gold hits. A radio is an excellent idea and the nursing staff really appreciate it as well. For 7 hours we chatted away in between contractions and I felt most relaxed and controlled. Randy breathed every breath with me and I thanked Frida at least 50 times for her breathing techniques in the childbirth classes!

I felt very strange when two little cots were wheeled in with 2 incubators. The idea of one baby is mammoth enough but two babies?

My transition between 1st stage and 2nd stage was very slow so they sped up the progress with a drip containing oxytocin. My contractions came hard and fast and I felt I'd lost some control over the process. After an hour of this I asked for the drip to stop and I was becoming very tired.

More relaxed now I was ready for delivery. The babies were small but I still needed an episiotomy as their heads were too fragile to push through the birth canal. My doctor helped them out with his hands, forceps weren't necessary. My first little boy was a perfectly formed baby. I'd been expecting a skinned rabbit look but he was tiny, helpless and beautiful. The second twin was a boy too! The only difference being he was blond. They both weighed 3½ lbs and were very healthy for their early age.

The delivery was quick and fairly painless. No labour is easy but this one wasn't nearly as traumatic and terrifying as I thought it would be. My husband provided the equivalent of pain relief, no other was necessary. With his controlled breathing I was able to relax between contractions and push hard for the delivery (deliveries!)

Yes I'd go through it again, even have twin labours again, but please, not at 31 weeks next time!

*Ann Boyce*



## 'The Johnston Family'

My name is Lynda Johnston, a new member of the Twin Club. I have a bright spark of a husband, Max is his name. He is really an Electrician! He is a wonderful husband and father of our twin sons Mathew and Michael. (Two years old in November).

We were married 4 years when I became pregnant. I was pretty lucky as I did not have one day of sickness, but was expanding very rapidly.

I was going to work through the pregnancy up to 32 weeks, but as I was growing larger and larger, my workmates were saying "are you sure you're not having twins or triplets or something?". I said "don't be ridiculous". Up until then, I had never given a thought to what it would be like to have more than one baby at a time.

The thought of it all got the better of me, so I went along for a scan at 25 weeks. I dragged my mother along for moral support. When the doctor announced that he found 2 heart-beats, I am sure my heart skipped 10 beats. You don't know whether to laugh or cry with excitement. Mum was so delighted. We phoned Max at work from the hospital — he was in shock all day, walking around in a trance saying "TWINs, TWINs". Once we got over the shock, the doctor said to finish work no later than 28 weeks, because I needed to rest up, so I did.

One week after I finished work, I ended up in hospital in premature labour. With an I.V. in the arm and pills, they managed to delay the labour pains. The hospital said I should stay there to rest — if I went home, the twins would be born too premature. In the meantime, the lady in waiting sits and knits, read, talked, slept, watched TV, and grew bigger and bigger. Then two more false alarms in the labour and still no babies.

At 34 weeks there was so much movement inside, I could not sleep at all during the night, so the next day an X-Ray was taken. Can you imagine, climbing onto an X-Ray table, then onto your stomach in that condition???? It wasn't easy! The X-Ray showed one baby completely turned, so they were both head down, ready to be born.

One week later, the flood gates opened during the night — it was finally time. One hour later, the labour started in my lower back and after six hours, two beautiful boys were born, Mathew first weighing 5 lb 15½ oz and then 9 minutes later, Michael weighing 5 lb 15 oz, five weeks premature. Max stayed and rubbed my back and assisted me through the birth which made it more bearable. The boys were strong and healthy and were able to leave the hospital with me.

We got ourselves into a good routine, but I could not breast feed because of the boys being too premature to suck. They were wonderful sleepers and good drinkers. Max and I fed alternately through the night and marked on a message board who we fed and when, and also made a note of who had a dirty nappy. This helped a great deal. The boys have always slept in the same room as they seem to be great company for one another.

The boys are fraternal twins but are very much alike to look at. However, they do have different characters. Mathew has a cheeky and comical character, and Michael is happy, but more reserved.

The strangest thing is they take turns of being boss. Every couple of days it changes. They have learnt to share very well, and they entice each other to do mischievous things together.

*Alan Flint*

Well now, almost 2 years old, we have two little magpies who do not stop talking the whole day long and want to learn things all the time. They are at a very interesting age now and a lot of fun.

We are looking forward to our first holiday with the boys to Queensland after Christmas — it should be an experience to remember!

## EARLY DIAGNOSIS

What will they look like?  
What will they be?  
These are the questions of some couples we see!  
Looking in name books,  
Twice, twice again,  
Searching for names for two new children.  
Not single child parents,  
But those specially blessed,  
With two baby twins to be loved and caressed!

*Alan Flint*

## WHAT TWO EXPECT

Twice as much trouble,  
Twice as much care,  
These are the trials that twin parents share.  
Twice as much loving,  
Twice as much play,  
There is no better end to a twin parents day!

*Alan Flint*

## PREMATURE BABIES

At 5½ months pregnant, it was confirmed I was expecting TWINS! — how else could you explain the past 4 weeks of kicking at both ends of my bulging stomach, simultaneously?? I have to admit I did feel excited despite the nagging feeling that it was going to be hard work! At 6½ months my daughter and son were born 13 minutes apart — 11 weeks prematurely and weighing just 3 lbs (1500 gm) each. All the anticipation and excitement was gone as two babies fought for their lives...

There were the unanswered questions:

- Why didn't my doctor insist I rest more?
- Why didn't I know that the tightness in my stomach the day before they were born, was really contractions?
- Why was I leaving hospital without my babies?

Everybody expressed their concern and their desire to help in any way but nothing could take away the emptiness and helplessness of being at home nor the emotional turmoil of life in the intensive care nurseries. Here our world was full of flashing lights and buzzers, drips and tubes, people coming and going and all the unanswered questions... we couldn't bear to be away from our children but sometimes it was just as difficult being with them and going through the constant ups and downs.

I don't think any parent ever gives up hope and that was enough to keep us going — and the day did come when each child was able to come home — home to the real world of sleepless nights, piles of dirty nappies, crying — it was wonderful!

*Dianne Johnston*

## FEEDING PREMATURE BABIES

I breastfed my twin girls for six weeks and then got cracked nipples which was very painful. I then decided to bottle feed and found out that they were much happier babies. They also became very colicky so we decided to go to the Grey Sisters aftercare home in Camberwell. The Sisters managed to get them into a routine, however, they did have to be on Phenobarb — Atropin for their wind pain. We had just moved house and my husband had just started a new job, so after five weeks in hospital, my mum coming to stay and trying to work it out ourselves, we found the Grey Sisters to be very caring people experienced in child care. My two year old was with us for one week and then the babies stayed on for a further two weeks and came home a lot better.

We feel it is an excellent place when the mother needs a break or the babies need to establish a feeding routine.

Now my babies are seven months old and have three meals and three bottles a day; sleep two hours between feeds and twelve hours at night. I now wonder what all the fuss way back then was all about!

*Bernie Nihill*

Before I was even pregnant, I knew that I would breastfeed my baby when or if it ever arrived! On discovering that 'it' was 'them' at 16 weeks, my determination was even stronger and never once did I think there may be problems because there would now be two.

Blair and Tarin were born at 34½ weeks much to my shock, but it still didn't occur to me that I may not be able to breastfeed them. My milk never did 'come in' as it normally does on the third or fourth day. I started expressing every

four hours by hand on the second day and it very gradually built up, measured by an eye dropper for the first two days! I might have given up at this stage if it wasn't for one particularly helpful nurse.

I was so keen to feed my boys that when I went home after ten days, I expressed 3 hourly during the day and 4 hourly at night. At fourteen days, I put Blair to the breast for the first time, luckily he knew what to do! I went back into hospital when they were 21 days old to get used to two babies and by this time, was expressing enough to feed one plus feeding each baby twice a day.

They had to have a top-up bottle after most feeds until they were 3 months old, but the amount and number of bottles gradually decreased. The only way I feel this was achieved was by very frequent feeding during the day and expressing afterwards to make sure the breast was empty. I was literally feeding all day, but I did achieve my objective.

Blair and Tarin continued to feed until they were 21 months old and I was five months pregnant. It wasn't easy at first but was possible because of my own determination to succeed. My belief was that it was the best possible thing for my babies and the invaluable friendship, help and support of my local Nursing Mothers Association also contributed to my success.

Reading back over this, it sounds very simple and straightforward, but of course, it wasn't. It was exhausting and seemed never ending and I can even remember thinking of giving up and putting them on the bottle at one stage, but I'm very glad I didn't. I don't think things would have been any different if I had, as both Tarin and Blair were very demanding babies and poor sleepers. It was a relationship that I wouldn't have missed for the world.

*Rae Cummings*

I thought I should be capable of breast feeding my babes since I found this came easily for my first child, and looking back, it was the simplest method for us.

My stay in hospital certainly didn't help the process. There we were seen as a bit of an experiment for the sisters (which of course, change 3 times a day with each shift!) It was decided that I should feed both babies together and this proved most difficult since alternately they would slip off the breast. It seemed impossible to get both mouths in the right position on the hospital bed or even in a large reclining chair that was brought in for me. Once we were in the right position, one would go to sleep or something else, so it was rather unsatisfactory without someone around to help by lifting one away, or waking the other up, or changing a nappy or cleaning up sick etc . . .

Once at home, with someone around for awhile, I became quite capable of managing feeds quite efficiently. Looking back, it would have been much easier on us all if I had fed the babes separately, at first, until sucking was well established.

After a few months, or was it just weeks, feeding could easily be managed on my own, on our two seater couch with a few extra pillows to hold the boys' bodies in place. For the night feed, I found three pillows was the shot, and later as they grew, just one pillow across my lap was enough.

We began solids at six months after much encouragement from the Infant Welfare Centre Sister. Cereal was interesting for them a couple of weeks, then potato, pear, apple, etc. They started with a training cup at about this time too.

The bigger twin weaned himself earlier than the smaller one. Our little one who is now 20 months old, still likes a suckle in the mornings and this doesn't interfere with our household, as it is decreasing. The bigger twin, our cuddly bear, lost interest at about 12 months.

*Helen Tootell*

## **BREASTFEEDING TWINS**

After spending 9 weeks in the Womens Hospital, I came home from hospital successfully breastfeeding my 3 weeks premature twin girls. I always fed them together, heads in front and feet going back under my arms. Being small when born, they were on 3 hourly feeds (day and night) for about 6 weeks or so, which was extremely exhausting to say the least.

I used to sit on a two seater couch, with the babies propped up with 4 pillows either side of me, tandem feeding them. My little boy (2 years 4 months) would come up to me and say "any room for me?" I would say "of course there is" and he would hop up beside us all. Somehow, I read him a story while I fed the girls and this would turn into a very nice time. We eventually got into four hourly feeds which was much better.

As they got bigger, their heads were too heavy to hold tandem so I turned them around and held them as per feeding singleton babies, and they wrapped their legs around each other. This was much easier. I still always fed them together as it was easier and quicker and I wanted to have as much time with my little boy as possible.

I breastfed them for 8½ and 10 months and weaned them straight onto a cup, thus eliminating the need for any bottles.

*Kym Cayzer*

When I found out at 15 weeks gestation that I should expect twins I was delighted and determined to breastfeed them. I have always believed that breastfeeding was best for babies and was determined to give my twins the same start as their two elder sisters were given. I had, on occasion, worried about low supply with my singleton children but read all I could on breastfeeding twins and reassured myself that supply would equal demand. I also read all I could about feeding premature babies; expressing and storing — just in case.

Fortunately my reading on premature babies was not needed and after an uneventful delivery at 39 weeks, I started feeding twin style on the delivery table. My boys were ravenously hungry and I fed very frequently until the milk came in and also the occasional glucose and water drink to get them to settle.

Feeding settled in well and I gained great confidence to know that I really could supply all my babies' needs and on one occasion when I did feel my supply low, I had the confidence to rest and feed frequently until the supply built up again.

I didn't introduce solids until six months and my let-down reflex and supply both seemed even better than they had been for one baby; i.e. more milk to spare. Feeding twins actually seems to suit my body better than feeding one; plus I have the bonus that I can eat what I like without gaining weight; and I save lots of time and money while being able to have an excuse to put my feet up and enjoy my babies.

*Jeanette Flint*

## POSTURE FEEDING TWINS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Don't laugh, it can be done! It isn't easy but quite often very necessary. I was very lucky that I had absolutely no problems with breast feeding. The boys fed well, they were 5 lb 11 oz and 6 lb 8 oz at birth. Benjamin fed well from the beginning but Jason, the second and largest twin attacked each meal time with vigor as if it might be his last, drowning himself in the process. The health care sister and I decided to posture feed only, the first three feeds of the day.

Luckily I had a lot of help for the first week as posture feeding is easier if a two man operation. It can be done by yourself but you need quiet and you must be relaxed.

For the two man operation you need to lay down on the bed and place a pillow either side of you, making sure they are pushed up snugly against you then put one baby on the breast making sure he is feeding well before putting the other baby on. Because posture feeding takes longer as the baby must work harder, it is a very relaxing feed for Mum (I often fell asleep especially at 4 a.m.) When baby finishes your helper burps and places the bub back on the breast. I didn't worry too much about the amount of time as the babies would just come off the nipple and fall asleep after about 25 minutes.

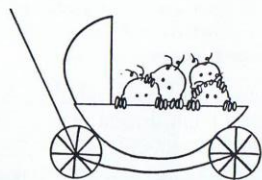
If you are alone make sure there are no distractions — a note on the door to say you are feeding, take the phone off the hook and if there are any other children make sure they are settled playing or reading in the same room you are feeding so they can't get into mischief.

Lay down and place the pillows in position. Lay the babies down on the bed next to you, one either side. Roll onto one side and place that baby on your breast making sure it is feeding well then roll slightly to the other side, tuck the

pillow securely under the first bub and make sure he hasn't come off. Then lift the other baby to the breast. There is some difficulty if one baby comes off as you have no hands available to help him back on. I found that by just moving my arm I could move his head and also by just moving my breast my babies found the nipple again. (Sounds hard but really it just takes time and patience.) When burping roll onto the side that the feeding bub is on and lift the other baby onto your hip and burp him. You cannot be lying completely flat on two pillows, otherwise it is difficult to lever yourself into position. When the babies began coping I cut out the lunch feed then a week later the breakfast feeding, leaving the 4 a.m. feed. After doing this for about a total of four weeks I was glad when my milk supply settled down so that I could resume normal twin feeding. Jason still gulps the first few minutes but can cope much better with it. I must be doing the right thing as they are eight weeks old and almost double their birth weight.

Posture feeding sounds like a lot of trouble but I felt the advantages of breast feeding twins outweighed bottle feeding especially with the good milk supply I had. I also had great support from my husband and relatives as I also have two other children (5 and 3 years old) and needed help in those early weeks.

*Marianne Marin*



## BREASTFEEDING TRIPLETS

One of the worst things that went through my mind when I heard that we were having triplets was that I would be unable to breastfeed.

As I held a strong conviction that breast milk was the ideal food for a baby and that a baby benefits from the close association breastfeeding allows, it was a great disappointment.

During the rest of my pregnancy I was not only told by both obstetricians I attended that "it was an experience I would have to miss out on", I was also firmly discouraged by friends: "At least no one will expect you to breastfeed" and the nurses: "Just wait until they arrive, then we (the nurses) will decide . . . it will make you have a nervous breakdown".

This discouragement had the opposite effect that was intended — I rose to the challenge. However, it did undermine my confidence to the extent that I didn't feed my babies as much as I was capable of doing in the first couple of weeks. This is something all mothers of twins should bear in mind immediately after the birth.

The organisation of feeding triplets is little more difficult than feeding twins — two together or one after the other. Despite the extra time involved I nearly always fed them separately as I felt they needed the extra warmth and cuddling that this provided. It also made an abnormal situation more normal.

I could feed all three in the morning then usually only two during the day. In retrospect I feel I could have managed all three if I had been more confident.

At about 3 months the girls started refusing the breast for a few days then would return to it. They also became very distracted. By 5 months Rebecca was such a poor feeder that it was preferable to give her the bottle. At about 6 months Bridget also gave up the breast but 3 weeks later displayed anxiety and returned to it with renewed vigor.

I am finding the experience of breast feeding a warm, comfortable and intensely satisfying one — and wonderfully convenient. I do realise however, that this is a personal one and it would be unrealistic to expect all women to want to breastfeed or to overcome problems that I haven't encountered.

*Belinda Barber*



## BOTTLE-FED BABIES

Our triplets — Anne, William and Elizabeth were born at 30 weeks gestation on 17th December 1986. They were little — weighing in at 1270 g and 1510 g and 1245 g respectively. Initially they were fed intravenously and then after a week graduated to tube feedings of expressed breast milk.

The babies were about four weeks old before they had their first attempts at breastfeeding. Unfortunately none developed a strong sucking action. Even at discharge when 11½ weeks old, they could only show test weights of 10, 20 and 45 g gains. This was after sucking by themselves for thirty minutes. It was very disheartening, especially as my supply was good and I had been expressing 2 litres daily for several months.

For us bottle feeding was the answer. During the babies' first month at home, my husband Jim took a 'holiday' to help. We held the babies for their feeds and alternated between the trio depending on the intensity of the screams and how much of the feed remained. Because of their poor sucking action, shocking wind and Anna's severe colic, it took about 2½ hours to feed the babies. It seemed crucial to us that we should have the babies feeding at set times and having a 'full' feed so that they would hopefully sleep well before the next feeding session.

When Jim had to return to work, my parents came from South Australia and stayed for the next two months. It was the longest they had been from the farm since my father's days abroad during World War II. It was wonderful having an adult for each child and it did speed up feed times until they lasted only about 1½ hours! We wrote down when each child's feeds finished and how much they

had taken. This was a great help in guiding us from 6 – 8 daily feeds to a pattern of four daily feeds. We kept recording the feeds until the triplets were six months old and were well settled into a routine of four feeds a day.

As my parents' departure approached we tried to teach the babies to prop for their feeds.\*\* We tried lying them on their sides in bouncinettes with nappies folded to hold the bottles. This wasn't successful. The babies wriggled around and kept losing the bottles. They would then scream, get more wind and be less able to drink. Feed times — especially at breakfast and lunch times when I was by myself — were times to be dreaded. Things did improve though.

At seven months Elizabeth started going to a speech therapist. Exercises improved her sucking and instead of taking two hours for a feed, she began to drink 200 ml in half an hour. All the babies learnt to prop well in their cots. We found that they drink best lying on their stomach with their head turned to the side. We then hold them to feed them the last part of their bottle.

Now our triplets are eight months old. Thanks to them being able to prop and have most of their feed by themselves, bottle times are no longer dreaded. Lunch times have also been made easier by the kind help of a roster of women from a local church. A home helper comes each afternoon to assist with that feed time, bathing and housework. Many hands do make light work... well at least a lighter load!!!

*Jenny Coates*

\*\* prop feeding must always be supervised

## FIRST WEEKS WITH BOTTLE FED BABIES

I had made a decision not to breastfeed quite a while before the twins birth, so I discussed with their paediatrician what formula would be suitable.

The girls were full term, and took to a bottle with no problems. I thought about routine and felt it important to have both on the same schedule so that if one woke for a feed I would complete that feed and straight away wake and feed the other twin. In a matter of days their sleeping and waking times were pretty predictable, and you could better organise your time around housework, shopping and visiting.\*

The bouncinette was a god send as mid-morning when the girls were awake, I would place them in front of me while I folded clothes, ironed, peeled vegetables and prepared tea etc. If the girls woke at the same time for a feed and I was on my own, I would prop one with a bottle in a bouncinette while I hand fed the other. My husband was able to help with the 6 a.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. feeds and sometimes my four year old daughter would feed one.

I strongly believe in sleep time for both mums and pre-school children so when the twins went down for an afternoon sleep, I took the phone off the hook, a sign on the door 'Mother and children resting' and we all went to bed. If you can't sleep in the day, at least put your feet up and watch television or read.

*Theresa McVeigh*

\*Be careful though not to become inflexible because of your routines. Sometimes the babies will wake at a different time, or you may need to go out (i.e. injection, welfare centre visits, doctor, etc.)

## BOTTLE VERSUS BREAST FEEDING

When I found out that I was having twins my biggest wish was to breastfeed both children. I read up about the different ways to position the children during feeding both separately and together.

Well, the big time arrived and the twins were 5 weeks premature and weighing only 1550 gms and 2150 gms. They both were in humidicribs to begin and as my milk came in the babies were gaviged (tube put in their stomach and milk poured through). Little by little they received a bottle feed each day. I was trying without a lot of success to maintain my supply. Because of the lack of constant stimulation and fondling of the babies my supply was low and establishing it took much longer. The special care nursery ensured that each child received a certain amount of breast milk at each feed. In normal breastfeeding situations a baby would not demand the same amount at each feed. I became frustrated and although attempting to relax I often did not succeed.

The babies finally went down to the prem. ward and what I thought would be the easy part became a real struggle. Bottle feeding is physically easier for babies than breastfeeding, especially when they have experienced it before. My daughter had a very small mouth and could barely get around my nipple. After 3 sucks she tired out. Even with bottle feeding she took a long time. My son did manage to latch on and feed quite well. We tried to feed both together but it was like an aerobics class for the nurse. She would succeed getting one on only to have to rescue the other.

I went into hospital and established breastfeeding with my son and bottle feeding with my daughter. Luckily I had my mother staying with us for 4 months and was able to breast feed one and



bottle feed the other. Although it is possible to do it yourself, you would be unlikely to get much else done. My son was a poor feeder continually coming off the nipple and he took a lot longer to feed. When my mother was due to leave I decided to wean my son to the bottle full time. I felt upset about it although I knew it was the best for all. The night before I weaned my son he fed poorly and needed comping . . . the next day he bottle fed perfectly and was so happy. I thanked him for the lovely times and declared it was all bottles from now on. I expressed milk for my daughter up to 3½ months, so she received half of her feeds from me . . . I felt pleased that I was able to give her that goodness.

My original goal was to feed two babies for nine months and ended up feeding one for 4½ on a breast/comp feed basis. I'm glad I had the experience as I knew I would not be having more children. Throughout my pregnancy I had to compromise . . . from vaginal birth to caesarian; a private hospital with a new maternity wing to an old hospital in a private section; taking my babies home from hospital with me as against 5 weeks later; enjoying visitors to hospital eyeing off the babies as against having a photo of the babies which I showed off and occasionally being able to take a visitor to them; and breastfeeding both to only breastfeeding one.

During this time I learnt to be more patient and accept compromise. After the traumas of the beginning, I now have two beautiful healthy 2 year olds who have given great joy to our lives. So whichever way you decide to feed your new babes, just try to accept the situation and be happy.

*Donna Flynn*

## FEEDING – WHAT SORT?

When I found out I was pregnant I was overjoyed, when I found out I was expecting twins we were overjoyed and in shock for 24 hours, when the initial shock was over, we came to terms with the fact.

I always told my Mother that when I had a baby of my own I was going to breastfeed. It always seemed such an easy and natural thing to do, and I always remember her saying "you must do what comes most easily and natural to you, not what you see others do".

I so much wanted to breastfeed my twins, I must have read every book, article and pamphlet on breastfeeding twins. I even knew how to express expertly before they were even born, the reason being I thought, if I ever had to leave them at feed times they would still be able to have my milk in a bottle.

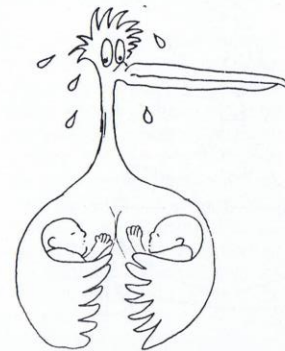
The weeks and the months went by and at 31½ weeks, a bit earlier than expected, we were blessed with beautiful twin girls weighing 5lb 3oz each. They were both very tiny and sick with a viral infection, and lived in incubators for approx 5 weeks. They were whisked away at birth. My milk came in 24 hours after the birth and because they were so sick they had to be gaviged with my milk. I had so much milk that I had to keep expressing for relief of engorgement. I was told that because of them being premature they had to learn to suck and feed and this would take time.

I was discharged after 7 days. I went home without my babies. I was devastated but I pulled myself together and came to terms with the fact that they were sick and could only come home when they were well enough and feeding properly.

I went every day to the Hospital to take my milk in. I would have to express every 3 hours throughout the day and night. After 5½ weeks I was able to bring my babies home. I will always remember that day with much happiness and with fear of the unknown.

I so desperately wanted to breastfeed them. They both were feeding every 4 hours and slept the same, so I always had them up together and down together.

I began to dread feed times-it was a constant battle. They just refused to latch on, they fought me all the time. I got frustrated and they got frustrated and were very dissatisfied at feed times, and I would still have to express to relieve the pain of engorgement. After 10 days with very unhappy babies, a frustrated mother and an understanding husband, I came to the conclusion that it was a lot easier for me to express and it was a lot easier for them to suck on a bottle, so I expressed with a hand pump every 3 hours throughout the day and once at night. I would get at least a pint of milk each express, which would take about 5 to 10 minutes, so I was able to keep up with their demands. In the end I was freezing surplus milk and expressing became a natural part of my day. Instead of putting them on the breast I put my



milk in a bottle. At least they were still getting my milk and feed times became a pleasure for both myself and my babies. They still fed every 4 hours so I always had 6 feeds each stockpiled in the fridge so it never became a problem. I kept this up for 5½ months, expressing every 3 to 4 hours until they stopped putting weight on and I had to put them on to formula. I would have gone on with this method of feeding had their weight improved but they were utilizing all I had from my milk and they were losing weight so formula was the only solution.

I soon found out that they both had an intolerance to cow's milk formula so I had to have a soya bean formula. They still fed every 4 hours. I always fed them together on a bouncinette. They always took so long to feed and were poor suckers right up until they were about 7 months old. At about 3 months they developed colic, we eventually got over the colic at about 9 months. I introduced solids at 6 months, but they have never really been bitty eaters. They seem to prefer to eat 3 main meals with a cup of milk instead of snacks in between.

They are now 14 months old and have always been good sleepers. They slept through the night at 3 months and still continue to do so. They gave up their bottles on their 1st birthday and now only drink out of a cup, but they still enjoy their milk. They eventually grew out of their milk intolerance at about 11 months.

So the moral of this story is "feed your babies the best way you think and feel is right and natural for you, not what others say you should and should not do".

My girls give my husband and me hours of pleasure and even though at times we could tear our hair out – we'd have it no other way.

*Annette Watling*

## 'STORK TALK'

How often have you heard these comments and wished you had these answers? For those of you who are expectant parents get ready for the shopping expeditions!

- You must have your hands full!
    - I'm thinking of having another
  - My sister had two children 12 months apart and I really thought she had a harder time than with twins
    - I hope she has twins next
  - How do you cope?
    - I haven't got a choice
  - They must keep you busy
    - Want to give a hand?
  - I've always wanted to have twins
    - Have mine
  - Are they identical?
    - Not below the waist (for boy/girl twins)
  - You poor thing
    - All donations can be sent to . . . . .
  - You have my deepest sympathy
    - We're into hatches, not despatches
  - Better you than me
    - I think so too
- I'm a twin
    - Your poor mother
  - Are you closer to one than the other?
    - Depends on where they're standing
  - Which one is the older/oldest?
    - They're twins!
  - Do they run in the family?
    - Not until they're two
  - Double trouble
    - Twice as nice
  - How do you feed them?
    - I was born with 2 breasts
- 'I've got twins, what's your excuse?'
- 'If you've had twins, you can do anything'
- 'You've got twins, does that mean you did it twice?'



## SLEEPING PROBLEMS

Our boy/girl twins, Daniel and Kalane, have always shared the same room. The decision to share or separate will depend on the family situation and other factors.

From the beginning I always tried to arrange outings etc. around their sleep times whenever possible. Establishing a good routine is important for your babies and for the parents and keeps everybody happy.

This lovely sleeping routine continued on blissfully. Until, suddenly at 18 months of age, for reasons unknown, our blissful nights ended. To our dismay Daniel turned into what is classified as a middle-of-the-night screamer.

He would wake up, stand at the end of his cot and scream until he received attention. We would go in, pacify him and off to sleep he would go. This would continue on 3 or 4 times during the night. By the end of the first week we had had enough and decided on a visit to the doctors. We were politely told he was in perfect health and all was fine. After enduring another week of Oscar-winning performances we knew he was deliberately doing it, for whatever reason we'll never know. Amazingly enough Kalane slept through Daniel's nighttime antics.

We decided in the end to use the Controlled Crying technique. This technique is simple but to carry it out is not so easy. While we were still up, going in at the required time intervals was fine, but once in bed, getting up and down at odd hours took great perseverance. It took one horrible week and Daniel went back to his normal sleeping pattern. He has since repeated this performance on two separate occasions and each time we introduced the Controlled Crying technique. The second time it took 3 nights to fix and the third time one night.

Sleeping problems are awful and put a strain on the entire household. Once you make up your mind you want to fix up the problem, don't give up, see it through at all costs. One bad week is a small price to pay compared to months or perhaps years of interrupted sleep and bad habits. Two good books which deal with various sleeping problems are: *Toddler Taming* by Dr. Christopher Green, and *Sleeping Problems* by Dr. Richard Ferber (excellent).

Good Luck!

Anne-Maree Silfo



## SLEEPING

Jake was a very fussy feeder, taking two hours, including one and a half to settle. Ben was very placid. Sleeping settled down when put onto the bottle at six weeks. By three months they were down by 7.00 to 7.30, woken at 10.00 for a feed, back down by midnight and sleeping through to 7.00 am. If babies woke before 7.00 and they didn't need feeding or changing I let them cry.

*Leanne Mutimer*

The thing I found hardest to accept about my identical twin boys was their apparent need for so little sleep. They were 4 years old when they finally slept the magical 12 hours at night and that didn't happen often.

Life didn't give them a fair start. They were born nearly six weeks early and for the first three weeks of their life, they were in a special care nursery with the lights blazing for 24 hours a day and constantly being woken for blood tests and three hourly feeds etc. When they came home ten days before their due date, we all had trouble settling down.

Their first 'wakeful' period of the day started at 4.00 am. They were very poor suckers so each feed would take one hour per baby. Being breastfed, there was a limited amount that dad could do to help. Getting them back to sleep after night feeds was a problem for quite a while and many hours were spent pushing them backwards and forwards in the pram to get them off to sleep again. We tried several times to leave them to cry for five minutes then reassure them and leave them for another five minutes, but they would just work themselves up into a frenzy.

Between 6 and 11 months we had them in separate rooms thinking that they may be waking each other up or keeping each other awake. It made no

difference, so for convenience sake, we put them back together in the same room. Between 10 and 13 months, we had all sorts of trouble getting them off to sleep of an evening as well. Controlled crying had no effect (leave five minutes, settle babies, leave ten minutes, settle babies, leave fifteen minutes, etc.) We tried rocking, swinging (in one of those hanging cane chairs) even going for a drive. At 13 months, I was desperate and getting only 3-4 hours broken sleep a night with my day starting at 4.30 am. I took the boys back to the paediatrician who checked them out and found nothing wrong. He thought that it was time for action as I couldn't cope any longer. He suggested that their sleep pattern was mainly bad habit and to try a 3 week course of Vallerger (an antihistamine which used in the correct doses acts as a sedative). I cried the first time I gave it to them, but they only woke once that night, fed and went back to sleep. Unfortunately, this only lasted 3 nights so we went back to the doctor who recommended Noctec, specifically for sleeping problems. It worked, also for only 3 nights. Back to the doctor who suggested Vallerger Forte which is quadruple strength Vallerger and often used as a pre-med for babies and children awaiting surgery. This finally did the trick but only lasted while being administered. When we ceased to use it the boys reverted to their old sleeping (or not sleeping) habits. By this time they were 15 months old.

At this stage, my husband had just about had it too, besides, we couldn't keep them on medication indefinitely! One night instead of feeding them when they woke, Frank took in a cup of water. They took one mouthful and screamed. He put them back to bed, said goodnight and left the room. They screamed for 20 minutes, during which time Frank had to

## SLEEPING

just about tie me to the bed to prevent me going to them. The next two nights were about the same. Then they suddenly started drinking the water and going back to sleep. At 18 months of age, we got our first unbroken night's sleep. From then till the age of about two, they would occasionally wake for a sip of water but go back to sleep. They settled better in the evenings too.

Once they were weaned at 21 months, I took up 'night duty' when they woke. Blair and Tarin are now four and a half and terrific sleepers.

### WARNING:

Perry was born when Blair and Tarin were two and a quarter; NINE MONTHS AFTER THEY STARTED SLEEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT!

*Rae Cummings*

Hi! My name is Blair . . . and my name is Tarin and we have been volunteered to write about our routine. Well, we looked it up in the dictionary and it's certainly nothing we have heard of before! We find it doesn't do to let mum get too settled in her ways as it makes for a very boring life.

Well here is a fairly typical day, although mum always says there is no such thing . . .

6.00 a.m.

The start of a new day — give or take half an hour — now what mischief can we create today. Mum takes us back to bed for our early morning breastfeed and changes our saturated nappies.

7.00 a.m.

We get to sit up in mum's bed and play while mum has her shower. Maybe we will be sick on her pillow again or wait till she changes us and wet all over the bed! Dad says goodbye and receives an

angelic smile in return (reinforces his idea that we can do no wrong — well not often anyway).

7.15 a.m.

Mum dresses herself (clever girl) and changes us. If we grizzle we get the toothpaste tube to play with.

7.30 a.m.

Breakfast at last, we get to make our first real mess of the day and mum turns the washing machine on which was loaded up last night.

8.00 a.m.

Help! She's put us in our cage, which she calls a playpen and we were hoping to get our hands on that dead blowfly on the window sill! Must be time for her to get out the vacuum cleaner, mop up or dust whichever is top of the list today. Another load of washing on.

9.00 a.m.

Feeling thirsty again, must be time for a feed again mum!

9.20 a.m.

Time to be loaded into our pushers for our daily trip to the washing line and our favourite fine weather game of hats on (mum), hats off (us). We usually win.

9.45 a.m.

This is usually when mum gets the funny idea that we should be tired so she sits on a lounge in the garden and reads while she pushes us to sleep which could be half an hour or two and a half hours. Mum gets our lunch ready — last night's left over vegies!

12.00 p.m.

Thirsty again - must be at least 2 hours since our last snack. Is she trying to starve us?

1.00 p.m.

Lunch is here again and our chance to landscape the kitchen floor with a loaded sneeze here and a fist full of mashed vegies there — it definitely improves the colour scheme (black slate with blobs of pumpkin and broccoli).

1.45 p.m.

This is the time when we usually get a ride in the car when there is shopping to do, people to see or messages to run (or trips to the park). We highly recommend that everyone has their own private chauffeur. We usually fit in another feed sometime while we are out. If we don't go for a ride, we usually go for a walk.

4.00 p.m.

Home again and time for another feed before mum pushes us to sleep for our afternoon nap. Now, will it be half an hour or one and a half hours today? While we are asleep, mum organises our tea (stewed fruit and yoghurt) and dad's dinner.

5.00 p.m.

Back in our cage again or if we create enough fuss we get to watch TV.

5.30 p.m.

Time to get the washing in and we get to play with the pegs.

5.50 p.m.

Into the car for our daily trip to the station to pick up dad.

6.00 p.m.

Dinner time but first a feed from mum. We'd better behave as dad is in charge of the spoon at this time of day. Mum cooks dinner.

6.45 p.m.

One of our favourite times of the day. We get to play on the floor with our nappies off while mum and dad have dinner. Why does mum always insist that we keep on the blanket provided?

7.00 p.m.

Bath time with dad, but why does he make such a fuss about our plastic ducks? First to get bathed gets dressed by mum and then we have our juice.

7.45 p.m.

Play time on mum and dad's knees until we grizzle, then a last feed from mum — during which we usually fall asleep (between 8.15 and 8.45). Now, how many times will we wake tonight, or will we give them a thrill and sleep through to 5.00 a.m.?

*Blair & Tarin Cummings*

## BIRTH TO BEDS

Our twins were due on the 21st January and I was sure that I would have a nice Christmas and New Year before the twins were born. I had to rest for one hour in bed each afternoon, so we organised to spend Christmas morning with my family and Christmas Eve tea with the in-laws. I saw my doctor on 23rd December and he sent me for an x-ray — in his words to 'check that there were only two!' The babies were both breech but all was fine, twin I was well down. My blood pressure was up a bit, but the doctor said I could have Christmas at home and if it wasn't down next week, he would put me in hospital for a rest.

On Christmas Eve when I got up from my afternoon rest, I had a show. I rang the hospital and they asked about pains. When I said that I didn't have any they said there was nothing to worry about. We went merrily to the in-laws and my waters broke at about 7.00 p.m. I rang the hospital and they said did I have any pains. I said no, and they said to 'come in soon. There was no hurry, but don't take all night'. When I arrived and the doctor examined me he said that the first baby had moved up and that we would lose it if we did not have a caesarean. Both babies were in foetal distress and therefore were both at risk. My blood pressure was also up a bit. I remember feeling very indignant and cheated of their birth and Christmas, but there was

nothing we could do — we had come this far and we didn't want to lose one or both of the babies.

My husband could not be with me as I was to have a general anaesthetic. The babies were born at 10.40 p.m. and 10.42 p.m. and weighed 6 pounds 10 ounces and 6 pound 10¼ ounces. I was a bit seedy and was not allowed out of bed. The boys were in humi-cribs and I didn't see them for a couple of days. I knew that they were a little unwell and it came as a bit of a shock on the third or fourth day when the paediatrician told me that the babies were out of danger and would survive. He told me that it was just as well that they performed a caesarean as they were so tangled up together that if it had been a natural birth, we would probably have lost them both. No one had told me all this before as they knew I would worry. My feelings changed to joy and I realised that if not for Mother Nature and medical knowledge, I might well not have any babies, much less the delightful pair that we were blessed with.

When I first came home from hospital, I was trying to breastfeed the twins. Because of their birthweight and because they were only 10 minutes on one breast every four hours, they were also having comp. feeds of formula. Breast-feeding just did not seem to be enough for these babies. After several weeks and much frustration and becoming very exhausted and only just managing to do feeds and very little else, it was pointed out to me by my mother that it was a ridiculous situation and that it should be either one thing or the other. I feel that I was just too close to the situation and that the obvious needed to be pointed out to me. We then put the babies on the bottle and this made feeds much more relaxing and enjoyable.

At about 8 weeks the boys decided to cut out their night feed. They then cut themselves down to three feeds per day. At the time the doctors and health centre sisters and other so called 'experts' were horrified. However, the boys thrived on 3 feeds and slept 14 hours per night.

As the boys got older they used to lean over the sides of their cots so far that I was frightened that they would fall and break their necks or something. So we decided to put them into beds, however we then had the problem of keeping them in until they went to sleep. We found that, after much searching, the best method for us was to be very pleasant and happy; put the children to bed and say goodnight. Then if they got up, to pick them up firmly and say nothing — just put them back into bed. The first week it felt like we put them back a thousand times, but then slowly it got better and better until they just stayed in bed without much trouble.

*Diane Eaton*

## THE TRUTH ABOUT TWINS??

I must admit I was not that happy about having a third child so soon but was overjoyed when I was told I was having twins. I felt very special being one of the 'chosen few' and still feel that way three years down the track.

At the time, I had a very romantic view about life with twins but at the same time, life with four children under 3 was very realistic.

My twin sons were born on 6/7/1985, full-term and excellent weights. They slept and ate well and were generally good babies. I was very lucky as life was very busy, especially in those first few months. I didn't have the problems of colic etc.

I made a pact with myself when the girls were about 8½ months old, that upon weaning them I would spend some time alone — completely by myself. And I did. I spent a terrific week alone at a health resort at Anglesea. I spent the time thinking a lot about the family at home, but I spent more time thinking about myself (more than I had in 10 years) and my body, and enjoyed sitting down to meals prepared by someone else, and especially savoured the hours alone in bed — no demands from anyone. The motto of the health resort is 'to put life back into your life' and I certainly did go along way in achieving that. Gee, it was great to see the children again and the energy I renewed when away I am now expending chasing the twins around in different directions!!!!

*Nan Caple*

### **"Playschool personalities — Anything you can do . . . . ."**

Your face, although you may not know it, is an oasis of entertainment. All you have to do is pull at it in some mildly self-destructive, flippant manner, and you will have all the children in the house giggling in wonderment. You probably have, hiding under that wrinkled cladding, another you. The actress, the singer, the entertainer.

Our girls love dancing and music, they always have. They love playing with balloons and drawing. There are lots of ways to entertain your littlies. Some nights, when we were waiting for dad to come home, I would get their cot mattress out and put it on the lounge room floor. I would get the nappy bucket and put that about a foot away from the mattress.

Instant entertainment! I never had any trouble with them thinking that the bed or couch were gymnasiums because that 'just wasn't allowed'. There was a time and a place for such activities.

They used to love having little obstacle races in the lounge room (nothing like It's A Knockout mind you), but just something a bit different to reading or listening to a tape.

We also used to get all our Christmas and birthday cards and set them end up on the floor. I would give the girls a balloon or a hankie each and say 1, 2, 3 go! The first to knock over all the cards (without knocking themselves over too), got a big kiss from mum . . . actually, they both got one!

Going for walks was fun and buying sloppy icecreams was too. Collecting things in the garden is very educational and of course water play in summer was just the bees knees. Running around with a 'nudey' bottom was a real giggle and if all else failed, a play up at the sink with a saucerpan and some rice and some t-bags did the trick.

There is cooking, eating, pasting, rolling around playdough and creating. As they get older, you might like to teach them to balance, walk with something on their head, play Simon Says or I Spy.

But remember, first and foremost that you are the most special and entertaining thing they have and they get a real kick out of seeing you enjoy yourself as well. You could tap dance (not literally of course), sing, mime, act, juggle (our dad juggles and does magic and it's great fun), do yoga, all at the same time as having a cuppa and doing the washing. Aren't we just too clever, hey?

So, keep smiling — I can see someone giggling at you now . . .

*Elsie (Linda, Court)*

### **ENTERTAINING BABIES**

From a very early age (6 weeks) Blair and Tarin were very difficult to entertain — they were demanding and fractious. Their idea of being amused was to have my face 8 inches from theirs every waking moment (which was often as they were not good sleepers).

When they were at their most difficult, I used to put one in the baby sling and hold one and sit in the rocking chair. Walks around the block were out of the question (our block is at least 2 km and not navigable by a mere mortal with a twin pram!). Number one on the entertainment list in the early days was a trip to the washing line both in a single pram (our back yard is not navigable by a twin pram either!!). They were parked under a tree while I hung out washing.

Before they learnt to roll over, I could prop them up in a bean bag near the window. Very early on, I learnt that when they were at their wits end and I was at mine, that I had to get out of the house. This is where I found Greensborough Shopping Centre a real boon. In their pram, being walked around the Centre, they were quite happy looking at the changing colours and lights going past overhead. The supermarket had the same effect, although there are only so many times you can walk up and down the supermarket.

My boys were very late developers which may have accounted for many of their hours of boredom — 5 months to roll over; 11 months to sit up and 13 months to get mobile. They also had a very short attention span and were only happy with one activity for a very short time, a habit they have thankfully outgrown.

*Rae Cummings*

### **HOW I SURVIVED**

I am a mother of 7 children and my twins are now nearly 6 years old. Even with all my experience nothing really prepares you for a multiple birth and the work involved in caring for them.

The items listed here are things that helped me through the early days.

First of all relax! Those babies of yours are pretty tough little mites and no harm will come to them through your mothering of them, be it a big muddle at first.

Bath time for me was a drag at first until I decided that Baby Baths for two were out! I settled on the Wash Basin in the Bath-room. Baths are easy to fill at the table but heavy to empty. The Wash Basin is fine - just pull the plug! No reaching up and over the baby bath either. A lot of articles say you don't need to bath them everyday — but by the time you mess about with dishes of water etc. to sponge them, you might as well bath them.

Two Baby Bouncers are a must. You can feed one and rock the other with your foot. (Your feet become like that second pair of hands we Mothers of Multiples need.)

Washing — the biggest chore of all. Have you a Drier? An invaluable investment if you can afford it. I would wash their clothes and put them straight into the drier. Who needs to stand there pegging out 1½ miles of nappies a week?

Try to get Home Help for a short while after you get home. All you need is a letter from your Doctor. It is a wonderful service and not too expensive. You are assessed on your earnings. Your local Council will arrange this service.

Get in touch with your local Health Centre. The Sister will probably be happy to do home visits for a while until you get into a routine. (you will, I promise!)

Last but not least. Take advantage of the services offered by your local Twins Club. They are a wonderful support group and have 'been there, done that.' Enjoy your wonderful babies — aren't we clever to have two or more?

*Elaine Dummett  
(Canberra Correspondent)*

## TWO MORE SCORPIOS IN THE HOUSE?

Yes, if you're asking yourself 'do they REALLY run in different directions all the time?' or 'does one ALWAYS get sick on Tuesday and the other two days later?' or 'do they HOLD HANDS in front of you, while you are trying to read one of them the riot act?' the answer is a resounding YES! Twins and triplets help each other — in and out of cupboards, in and out of tissue boxes (of course minus the tissues because they're all over the floor in bits), and in and out of really sticky messes (or as I have seen in some households, powdery messes. . .)! You are in for all of that, and more. Maybe it's not so different from having two children, but remember yours are (or will be) the same age, at the same stage — and there is only one of you. . . Don't despair though. You are not part of an endangered species, (the pictures you see of multiples tying up their parents are only someone's imagination. . . I think). You are part of an increasing one.

I suppose I should have guessed something was different about my pregnancy when making an appointment with my SECOND gynaecologist (the first one said some very questionable things to me, so I changed. . . at seven months!). He said 'Mrs. Court, oh you're having twins'. He was smiling. My face wasn't so flexible. My eyes were, but my mouth wasn't, that is until I came to and explained perhaps he thought I was

somebody else. Somebody else was having twins. Anyway, to cut a long story short, and, strange as it may have seemed without an examination, this doctor was right as was confirmed by ultrasound two weeks later (going in with a full bladder plus two thirty-weeks grown babies was sheer hell). I wrote a page every month of my pregnancy to keep it to read to my 'baby' and on re-reading these pages, it never occurred to me that twins were on the cards. My dad's brother had twin boys, but so what!

• My second doctor was wonderful. We had instant rapport, something I think is very important. It is imperative that you are able to talk about the things YOU find important to someone who can relate to you — not just 'another pregnant mum'. It is important that your husband or mate is encouraged to be a part of the pregnancy. . . (now what is the saying about who started it all. . .?). You do feel and think different things when you are pregnant — and with a multiple birth, you may indeed have more questions and be a little more anxious about things. Don't worry, that is quite normal.

My days chortled by — one braxton-hicks contraction after the other (I had had them since three months). At 8 months, the girls decided to come out into Melbourne town, but not before almost being sent home first. Of course the doctors and nurses know what they're doing, but I was a little perturbed when one minute I was being told to go, and the next, they were getting the doctor on the phone. Patience and Pethidine prevailed and some hours later, Cassandra and Jessica were born. I might add here that St. Georges hospital at the time had the Birthing Chair, but I was not allowed to use it for a multiple birth. One word about the Pethidine. I didn't mind having something to help me cope. But it is YOUR decision in the long run. I

suffered no ill effects, and I don't believe my children did either. Our girls were four weeks early, but Mother Nature's Timeclock doesn't always run to time, especially with a multiple birth. You have to rely on the hospital staff who usually do all they can to ensure you are comfortable and happy.

We asked the hospital staff not to put the twins' time of birth on their cots because we didn't want everyone to know who was born first. It may seem trivial, but we felt that when the time was right to let them know, WE wanted to be the ones to tell them — not well-meaning relatives saying who was born first so that 'you are twelve minutes older than your sister'. The hospital staff understood our dilemma and did as we asked. Of course the girls are interested to know now, but we are cautious in our answers. Children react most strangely to some things being twins, and this may just be one of them. It is your decision.

Our babies stayed in hospital for a while, nothing unusual about that. They were allowed out of hospital only on the proviso that mum and babies went into an after care place, which we did. The after care homes offer advice, support and physical help. There are quite a few around (including the country) and your doctor can help you out with further details. You can also utilise the aid of the care places for coping with other siblings whilst you stay at home with the twins or triplets. Keep an open mind on after care homes. They can be of incredible benefit when you need it most.

All this time I was trying to breastfeed, and it didn't work out. So, onto the bottle we went and dad could help which was great. It took us some months to establish a routine; the girls were sickly and poor sleepers, also nothing unusual about that. But at the time, it drained us so much we looked permanently asleep!

Just a few positive points to end on. Our girls were bad sleepers but looking back maybe that was because I was very concerned, overly concerned, and this may have upset them. I couldn't feed due to about three anaesthetics in four weeks, and this also concerned me. But if it happens to you — don't fret. I even asked a doctor for a 'nasal spray' to encourage the 'let down reflex' but he wouldn't give it to me. I was too tired to push him (ask me how I feel about that now and you'll get a ear full)! Take one day at a time, and enjoy them. I look back at my favourite girls' dresses or jumpsuits and almost get clucky. They grow into toddlers and preschoolers and teenagers so very quickly.

I hope this article enlightens you — not frightens you. Having a multiple birth is one of the most special things that will ever happen to you and your husband.

*Linda Court*

## HEARING HASSLES

Since one of our girls was about two years old, we suspected hearing trouble. She is now 5½ and finally something is being done.

I just wanted to write something short and to the point about such worries. If you, as a mum or dad, feel there is something wrong with your child — you are probably right. Instinct is an incredible thing. Our little girl is now having bad problems reading and understanding other people. At home, she turns up the television, mumbles (not all hard-of-hearing people yell), and finds it hard to hear where noises are coming from, thus she is also disoriented. Now, I suspected this three years ago. Since that time, she has had hearing tests, one by the Council which did necessitate a six week check up. But nothing seemed seriously wrong.

The National Acoustic Laboratory has now taken two readings twelve months apart and has come up with problems in both ears. Since seeing a specialist, Jessie is now on medication, but may need hospitalisation for tubes. Fluid in the middle ear is, by all accounts, very very common in children — but it would have been better for all concerned if it had been diagnosed sooner. However, I have it on good authority that the fluid does disappear, and as such, it is hard to make a reading on.

If you suspect a problem, follow it through with the Welfare Sister, the Council, kinder, school or local doctor. It is awful to watch your child and know she's not coping. The best thing you can do is to tell someone about it, and follow it through. This doesn't only apply to hearing, it applies to lots of problems with kids.

Are you listening?

Linda Court

## DANIEL JOHN AND MATTHEW ROSS

Our twin boys are now 12 weeks old and I think that between Don (my husband) and I we have done quite well. We have made a few mistakes but have had a lot of fun on the way.

We knew at about 14 weeks that twins were expected and it was a very exciting time just telling people, especially my parents who for them it would be their first grandchildren.

Don and I had been wanting to have children for 7 years but nothing was fruitful and after 7 operations and hormone treatment (not the fertility drug) I was finally pregnant and twins at that. I am also a full-time stepmother to Don's two boys aged 18 and 13.

Leading up to delivery was probably the most exhausting time for both of us as I got so big and towards the end I couldn't even get in the shower. I Put

on a total of 37 kilos (yes kilos) not pounds. I went from a size 10 to quite near a size 24. Just jokingly I said 'It will probably be a long hot summer'.

I was induced on the 19th of February for medical reasons (oedema) having managed to go to 38 weeks. I think looking back that being induced does not get the body properly adjusted/prepared for the fast contractions that occur as I went into 3 minute contractions almost straight away. This resulted in having an epidural as I just couldn't cope.

The boys weighed in at 5lb 6oz and 5lb 7oz with 3 minutes between the birth and we were able to come home after 15 days.

We had got quite organized before the delivery but coming home is still quite a different way of life to all of the hospital routines. Don had taken 4 weeks annual leave so that we could learn how to look after them together as a team, as nappie wash and home help was not within our budget.

I had decided to breastfeed one and bottlefeed the other alternatively but we made the BIG mistake of both of us getting up together all through the night which ended up with both of us becoming very tired and bad tempered. For the last week of Don's holiday we kept ½ hour between feeds and I got up for the night feeds and expressed milk for some of the daytime feeds so that I could have a few hours sleep.

Bathtime at home was not the dreaded episode that we had thought it would be, the boys really love their bath as long as they know/feel that the person holding them is confident and happy.

Daniel and Matthew have been sleeping through from about 10pm until 7am and we are down to five feeds per day and it feels like heaven.

Good luck to all the new mums if you're like us when they giggle at you — you know they are worth it.

Priscilla Thomson

## A LIGHT HEARTED LOOK AT 'HOW TO HAVE FOUR CHILDREN UNDER 3½ AND BE A COPER'. . . OR . . . 'HOW TO HAVE TWINS AND OTHER CHILDREN AND SURVIVE'

### THE PREGNANCY

Reassure your other children that Mummy will have NO MORE babies after these two, (they are sick of hearing about THEM in your tummy as an excuse for all disasters around them, i.e. no more jumping on mummy's back, front; no more jumping on the trampoline together etc.). Reassure yourself that those stretch jeans with the crutch near your knee-caps looked ugly anyway. Reassure your husband that, well . . . he can think of something.

### THE DOCTOR & PAEDIATRICIAN

They are usually best mates. My humorous duo lifted my spirits and my doctor was more disappointed about my stretch marks than me. These two are the ones who like us at our most plain, fat and hysterical. They excuse all and I felt confident in their ability until my doctor donned a plastic BBQ apron at the imminent birth of twin number one and the paediatrician told me afterwards I was 'thrilling' to watch as I delivered babies like a machine gun! (For their names, see me later).

### THE BIRTH

Come now, we have done this before! Ha! Ha! Don't believe it. Doesn't your stomach hang *much* lower and sit between your legs on a seat of its own? Aren't your boobies oozing out of your sexless Berlei? Are your thighs expanding sideways at odds with your lace Perfects? Well, your birth will be longer — twice as long to be precise. You will have *two* sessions on the mask; two chances to abuse the staff and two lots of pant-like-a-doggie breathing BUT you will have TWO beautiful little cots waiting near your birth bed. Two sets of name tags and nappies and word has already got

around the labour ward that YOU'RE here. Enjoy this little piece of stardom and the opportunity to experience a truly special event. All my children's births were unique and special but a twin birth, even for the doctor, is a rarity and a happy culmination to all the anxious moments for all of you. Try and REMEMBER every bit of it.

### YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

Forget it, at least for the first six months. Visitors may be okay but remember to recognise your emotional enemies and put a plug on their visits. They say 'Do they ever go to sleep?', 'Aren't they small?', 'Wouldn't it be easier if you bottle fed them?', 'You always seem to be feeding them'. Later on, still watching you in their favourite chair they say 'You never stop', 'I don't know how you cope', 'I couldn't stand it'. Politely grab their cold little hand and their little terror who has demolished half your house and say *you'll* come over next time. Invite visitors to make their own coffee, get their own bickies and give them your nappies to fold. You won't resent them, they'll feel useful and you'll enjoy their chatter. Husband and you should try to go out but I know this is so difficult. An escape from your children and the house does you both good. At the early stages, your husband feels completely overwhelmed and really is willing to do anything if asked in the right way.

### FREE TIME

'Leisure' — you know, BLUDGE TIME, SPARE TIME, or HIDING TIME. You will find it; you have to make it. This is best done (after many trials and experiments) in Spotlight or Lincraft. You locate the pattern books, select any book, no-one watches you — serves you, TOUCHES

you, talks to you AND IT'S FREE. It's also quiet and you get a pencil and a pad to draw on. You can stand there until the shop closes but if you do, make sure you turn the page at least once every five minutes or they may get suspicious about that sick on *both* your shoulders!

### FEEDING

Do this with bottles or boobies. You know, you've done it before. Both work quite well but select what is best for you. You will eventually anyway. Your other children soon learn to breastfeed Humphrey or alternatively, buy him a disappearing toy milk bottle.

I fed my girls for 11½ months, I looked like I was half dead by the end of it so a word of warning. My philosophy was that I did it for the others, so I'll do it for the girls. I roomed in from when they were one hour old. I fed on demand and could not feed simultaneously, so at age eleven months, they were feeding four times each a day at least (with tiny top ups), the equivalent of feeding one new baby eight times a day for 11 months.

I had ignored my exhaustion, I had always felt this tired it seemed, and had become physically so run down I was anaemic and had symptoms of calcium deficiency. Take Calvita or similar tablets every day and although I started, I got a bit slack — they don't come out in the milk. Mothers of twins, let alone those with others as well, are twice as susceptible to becoming ill as they are really too busy to fit doctors appointments in for themselves. It is also easier to ignore warning signals. Be aware of how you feel if your tears are becoming more frequent and your attitude apathetic.

Twin mothers can also be more susceptible to post-natal depression — a *physical* illness. The home really does revolve around mum and she sets the mood for the house.

### SLEEPING

Don't expect any and when you get, WOW! Put them in the same room from the word go if possible. I know you had separate rooms for each but they say children who share a room maintain closer relationships, lifelong, with those they shared with. Once we (mum and dad) had come to the conclusion that the twin babies and their sleeping was a 'whole house' priority, things went smoothly. Older children rarely woke with the babies and learnt to adjust quickly. The fact that you are tied to the house, literally, means that they get used to sleeping regularly in the same room and cot. They *will* be different and have different clocks but anticipation of a certain behaviour, even if difficult, leaves you feeling in control. I always made the bassinets twice, i.e. with two layers of sheets, protectors and a flannelette nappy (used only for this purpose) as a removable pillow. This absorbs little messes and is quickly replaced. As for dummies, well if you feel you need one, do what makes you feel good. Otherwise, offer it to one of the twins!

### YOUR OTHER CHILDREN

These are the ones we *really* worry about. Will they be emotionally, socially, physically disadvantaged by the unplanned arrival of two more siblings? Well that's up to good luck and common sense (only common to those who have it).

The fact that we worry about our children shows an awareness of their feelings. Praise, encouragement, loving words can all be given while wiping a dirty bottom or two. Feeling we haven't the time to give anyone 'quality time' makes us feel guilty but remember to keep everything in perspective. Always directing children's play leaves them little opportunity to develop imagination, independence or initiative. I believe the

greatest gift we, as parents can give to our children, is self confidence. This does not result from two stories a day, making puppets, trains etc. but perhaps listening and responding more quickly to your children. It may mean explaining that the new babies need and deserve all this attention so they can grow properly. It may mean explaining about waiting; how we all wait for things, such as the bus, the tea to cook etc. Talking, explaining, praising and positively reinforcing appropriate behaviour is nurturing. The love part is easy, ensuring that your children feel loved is an ongoing process of observation. Anticipate negative reaction from your older child/children and you'll be equipped to handle them. If they can be given small jobs that relate to caring for the babies they see them, not as rivals, but as little people they help to take care of. Remember to point out, however, how noisy, grumpy & poeey babies can be.

### HOLIDAYS

Our first was a trip to Millgrove when the girls Georgia and Hannah were three months, Nicholas was two and Luke 3½. We had a ball but Daggy Dad forgot to buy luggage straps for the roof rack and all our cots, mattresses, blankets, disposables, etc. etc. were squeezed INSIDE the 1973 Ford Sedan. Quasimoto (me) sat on a window winder in the back with two capsules and a toddler seat. Luke sat on a potty chair in the front seat and vomited most of the way up into Daggy Dad's golf hat.

When travelling, never be a passenger mother — DRIVE. Otherwise, people will climb on you; feed from you; or ask (horror) for food and drink. You will be on 'tuckshop duty' and in charge of vomit and nose wiping as well as 'I spy' coordinator. You will have to read the (bloody) Melways and maps and eventually control the hideous whinging. And, stay

awake lest you miss THE turnoff! When you get there, do not linger near the groovy 1973 Ford Sedan. Run to the owners/your hosts and talk or else ask for the toilet. Otherwise, you'll have to change poeey nappies; unpack the beds and set them up. Try also to be on 'setting up the barby' duty — it takes ages to find the wood!

### THE ESSENTIALS

A van of mammoth proportions, a nappy washer (yes, him). Mine has done it for two years, night and day and for that duty alone I am forever grateful. Dads of twins are special.

Your local Twins Club for fun, laughter, information and reassurance.

More patience than you had before. More flexibility than you had before and even though you and your family are much bigger than before, you are luckier - you have twins!

Karen Raines

P.S. The girls are now two, the boys 3½ and five and we all seem pretty happy and well adjusted. People tell us this *but* we don't feel *normal* and we're glad!

### RECOLLECTIONS OF A TWINS' DAD

I can still remember the moment very clearly. Comforting a tearful Kim who minutes earlier had been informed she had a twin pregnancy, reassuring her we would be able to cope but not really knowing myself how we would.

All through the early days of that second pregnancy she knew something was amiss, unlike her first which was relatively normal and resulted in the birth of our first child, Scott. Now the doubts and fears of a troubled pregnancy were replaced by the doubts and fears of a twin pregnancy. We consoled ourselves



with the fact that we already had half the required number of nursery items, purchased a clothes dryer and a dishwasher, and settled back to await the forthcoming birth. Kim's seven-week hospitalization prior to the birth, due to a bout of contractions at 29 weeks did little to blunt my enthusiasm at the prospect of having a set of twins in the family.

The refusal of my request to be present at the unscheduled caesarian-section, which at the time had me fuming mad, faded from my mind as our paediatrician wheeled two humidicribs towards me. Congratulations, "two girls" was his greeting. I was stunned. We had somehow convinced ourselves that we would have a boy/boy or boy/girl set, but a girl/girl combination seemed very unlikely. I really was thrilled. To be told later that our girls were identical was purely icing on the cake.

After a further two weeks, Scott and myself picked up Kim, Leah and Kelly in the Commodore, which all of a sudden seemed too small for the family, and headed home. You will notice the street outside a Twins Club meeting is full of mini-buses and station wagons!

The girls' first week home was perfectly regulated — eat, sleep, eat, sleep and so on. Kim and I both thought this twins raising is not so bad, but shortly after the wheels fell off the wagon, so to speak. Many nights of not getting to sleep until 3 a.m. then having to rise to Scott at 7 a.m., he having had a full night's sleep and raring to go, completely drained us of energy.

When the girls began to sleep through their night feeds, it really eased the situation and looking back I think you can cope with almost anything provided you can get that full night's sleep.

Leah and Kelly have just passed six months of age and as the weeks pass so they grow more and more alike. Friends find it difficult to tell who is who, but the girls' smiles give them away, each having her own particular grin. Recalling those early days, the sleepless nights, the piles of nappies and the sheer hard work that must be put in, I know I share the same feelings as Kim and all the other parents of multiple birth children. Yes it is a hard slog, but you know you have been blessed with something just that little bit special.

Greg Cayzer

### BABY RECORD — IT GETS EASIER

This article is to give those *first time* mums of twins reassurance. Don't despair too much in the early months, life does become easier, even though you think it never will.

We kept a diary on our boy/girl twins from their first day at home until their first birthday. We thought it would be a great idea to keep a record of a very historic year for us, record their progress and would be something lovely to show them later on in life.

In the diary we recorded their feed time, milk intake (they were both bottle fed), toilet habits and a big section with comments. My husband and I often look back through it and laugh, especially at the comments. We can't believe how we survived some days, especially in the first three months. Below is an extract from our second day at home, minus the comment section, some of which is unprintable.

Friday 10/1/86

	DANIEL (boy)	KALANE (girl)
Both fed at 12.00a.m.	wp 100mls	wp 100mls
Both fed at 4.00a.m.	w 105mls	w 90mls
Both fed at 7.00a.m.	w 105mls	w 110mls
Daniel fed at 10.00a.m.	w 90mls	
Kalane fed at 11.00a.m.		w 100mls
Both fed at 3.00p.m.	wp 80mls	w 90mls
Daniel fed at 7.30p.m.	w 100mls	
Kalane fed at 8.00p.m.		w 90mls
Both fed at 11.30p.m.	w 100mls	w 80mls

As well as the numerous feeds they also had three doses of different medicines once a day for varying lengths of time. At this stage on an average we went through 170 nappies a week.

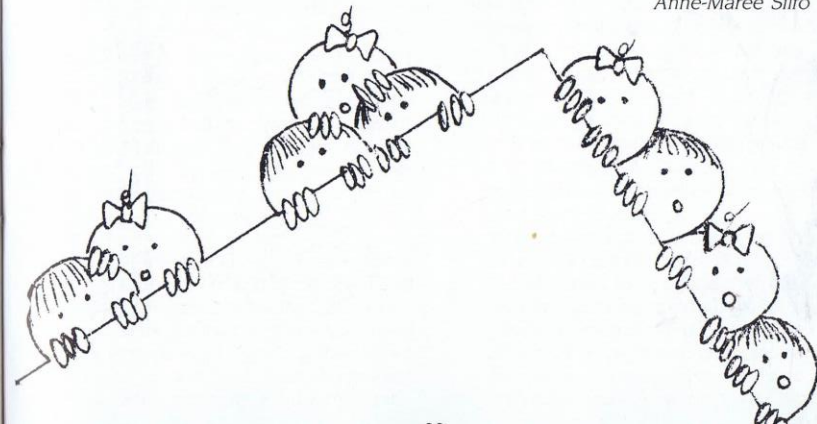
Now, 8 months later, you can see how much easier everything is. Four feeds a day and down to an average of 130 nappies a week.

Wednesday 26/8/86

	DANIEL (boy)	KALANE (girl)
Both fed at 7.30a.m.	w 240mls	w 240mls
Both fed at 11.00a.m.	wp 120mls	w 120mls
Both fed at 4.00p.m.	w 180mls	wp 180mls
Both fed at 7.15p.m.	w 190mls	w 200mls

I never thought at the beginning it would ever get better as I was so exasperated with everything, but here is recorded proof and I'm living proof. I've survived to write this story and proud to be the mother of twins.

Anne-Maree Silfo



## POTTY TRAINING

When my babies were tiny, I really didn't have much trouble with them, but there was something ahead of me I was not looking forward to one little bit. You guessed it . . . TOILET TRAINING!

At 12 months my mother kept saying to me how she trained her three singletons by 12 months and wasn't it time I started with mine. But I put it off for a couple of months, then gave it another thought, then put it off for another couple of months.

Meanwhile, I read a few books on the subject to figure out the best way to tackle this situation. Then I decided the way I would handle it.

The week they were two, I decided to start, which turned out to be the perfect age for them, as they could talk a little as well as understand what I said.

The first week I left the nappy off all day except sleep time, no training pants or anything. I restricted them to an easy to clean area with a potty in a central place. (Leave potty out for a while before starting to introduce it). If they made a mess on the floor, I reminded them to use the potty next time, without growling. Every hour I would ask them if they wanted to do a wee or a poo and if they did I reminded them again to use the pot. I needed to stay home as often as possible. When they realise where it comes from, it doesn't take long for them to catch on to using the pot, if you remind them frequently.

Leaving the pants off gives them time to run to the pot without worrying about pulling any pants down first. By the second week, I tried the pants and found they were coping with pulling them down without any accidents. But if this doesn't work, leave them off for a bit longer.

It really wasn't as bad as I was expecting. One took a week, the other took three weeks because I kept growling if he made a mess, then he went backwards and made more messes.

Keep your cool if possible, don't forget two potties are needed as they usually want to go at the same time — it's true!

*Lynda Johnston*

## PRAMS, PUSHERS & STROLLERS

### PRAM HIRE

Our Club hires prams out for a period of 3–6 months which gives you plenty of time to contemplate which kind of pusher/stroller will suit you. It is a great help to talk with other members too.

Most people hire for 3–5 months, but it will depend on the size of your babies or whether they were premature or not.

### PUSHERS AND STROLLERS

Between 5–7 months (once again depending on their size and whether your babies can sit up), you will need to get a pusher or stroller. I will point out here that a pusher usually has more support than a stroller.

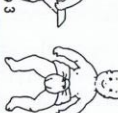
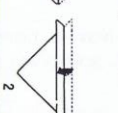
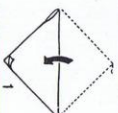
There are many brands on the market to choose from and some are McClaren, Childcare, Jane, Peregó, Infacare and Steelcraft. It is not worth mentioning which are the best or even listing all brands as many makes will come and go in a short space of time.

Points to remember when choosing a pusher or stroller are:

1. Do we want face to face, side by side or both facing the same way?
2. Do we need to separate them (e.g. one going to be minded, while the other goes to hospital, etc.) Note: strollers that are in one piece are narrower than separated strollers joined with clips (available through our Club).

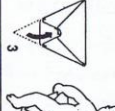
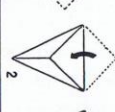
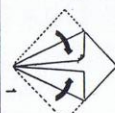
### 1. TRIANGLE — Often recommended for younger babies

1. Fold nappy in half, pinning the top and bottom corners.
2. Turn nappy over, taking account of baby's size.
3. Place baby on the nappy.
4. Bring all three corners together and fasten with one pin running side-to-side.



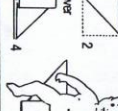
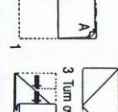
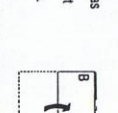
### 2. KITE — Gives thick padding in front

1. Fold in left and right-hand corners till they meet.
2. Fold down the top corner to make a triangle.
3. Fold up the lower point.
4. Place baby on the nappy.
5. Fasten with two pins running side-to-side.



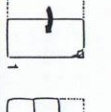
### 3. THICK TRIANGLE — Gives the best absorbency

1. Fold nappy in half.
- 1a. Turn nappy A to B — to give folds as in diagram 2.
3. Turn nappy over with triangular part underneath.
4. Fold square part along dotted lines.
6. Place baby on nappy.
8. Pin with one pin running sideways.



### 4. RECTANGLE — Gives the thickest padding at back

1. Fold nappy in half.
2. Fold down top one-third.
3. Place baby on nappy.
4. Fasten with two pins turning side-to-side.



### 5. PARALLEL — The neatest way to fold a nappy

1. Fold top and bottom corners to overlap, depending on baby's size.
2. Fold in left corner till its top edge is level with top fold.
3. Fold in right corner the same way.
4. Place baby on nappy.
5. Fasten with two pins turning side-to-side.



### USE SAFETY-LOCK NAPPY PINS

Always pin your baby's nappy with special Safety-lock nappy pins. These are designed to prevent the nappy from slipping down and around the baby's body. Fasten the nappy pins from side-to-side across baby's body — never running neck-to-loe. Then even if a pin comes open it is less likely to hurt baby.



Wrong



Right

3. Will it fit in our car with all the other gear?
4. Is it too heavy?
5. Will it fit through doorways?
6. Can we afford it?
7. Does it come with stormcover and hood or do you have to pay extra for them?

One final note. If you are fortunate enough to have someone in the family offer to buy a pram it is well worth considering the newer pram/pusher all in one type. They are quite expensive but you are getting the use immediately and they will take you right through till the babies are around three years of age.

*Helen Steele*

### POSITIVE POINTERS — SLEEPING

- A Dimplex heater will thermostatically control the heat in the babies' room for you during night visits and feeds.
  - Wrapping babies very tightly in the 'hospital hug' may help them to sleep. Fold blanket in a triangle, fold over one point and wrap under baby. Bring up bottom point and fold across baby's chest, wrap points under baby. Bring across right point and pull very tightly and wrap right around.
  - Don't feel guilty if one or both babies need dummies. Some babies need extra sucking (especially if bottle fed). It is maybe better to give them dummies than extra bottles. They are good 'pacifiers', nothing wrong with that. Some club members have had problems taking a dummy away 'too soon'. Other members have had 'no problems at all' when the time came to give up the dummy.
  - Don't pick up the babies at night, just pat on back. Try dummy, - he/she may not actually be awake. Check it is not hunger. Once you've stopped night-feeds, don't resume. Send in dad with water. If not sleeping still, try separating — or controlled crying technique (see member's article).
  - If breastfeeding, try to master the art of feeding lying down, one at a time. Have bassinets beside your bed and snooze while feeding.
  - YOU must rest. Don't be tempted to do 'just one more thing' after dinner,
- spend this time with your family — remember, there is the late night feed ahead of you.
- YOU decide what the 'eventual' sleeping pattern will be, not the children. If you don't want them waking every two hours, or getting upset when you walk out of the room, take very positive steps towards those goals. Be persistent.
  - Give children a 'wind down' period before bed. Bedtime rituals are very important, whether it is a book singing or a quiet game.
  - A wall clock may help them to get to sleep and encourage their interest in learning numbers.
  - 'Cot banging' is normal for babies. No one is sure whether it is due to frustration or not. Just try to ignore it or distract their attention.
  - Remember that babies sometimes do not know how to lie down again in the cot although they have learnt to stand up in it — a pointer for endlessly crying babies.



### POSITIVE POINTERS — FEEDING

#### BREAST

- Some mums have been stunned at how long it takes to feed new babies. Even almost full-term and good weight babes can be slow feeders. By the time you feed, burp and change, you are almost back to feeding again. Be aware of this and have everything ready.
- Using a 'V' pillow makes it easier to feed two at a time by breast.
- Try different methods of breastfeeding before giving it away, be flexible and be determined.
- Although some mums thought breastfeeding was best, some by ten months were physically drained. Be aware, perhaps earlier weaning might be the answer.
- Nightfeeding in relative close proximity plus the 'easiness' of breastfeeding and the desperate need to quieten babies to get you back to sleep may mean that at six months you are still up three to five times nightly! A call to the Paediatrician may give you some good basic points (plus help from Phenergan on the initial nights). This may mean babies breastfed during the day but not by night.
- Night feeds may pass more quickly if you watch television. Dad could share them (and get to watch all the good movies). See if dad can do the changing while you feed, and then swap, (babies that is, not dad do the breastfeeding. . .)
- Feeding them, one mum found that it was initially easy to make up lists containing what each baby had had and when. It is good for keeping track of feeding and also invaluable if the babies are sick and you could show it to the Welfare Sister.

#### BOTTLE

- Some mums found it easy to make up all the bottles in one go, others found it easy to make up a jug and pour it into the sterilised bottles as the need arose.
- Most mums use cold water sterilizers for bottles and dummies. Two of the small sized sterilizing units are usually required, or use a large plastic container with the water level required marked on the outside and then you'll automatically know how much solution or tablets are required. When the babies are small, you can also sterilise the spare dummy container in it.
- Some mums preferred not to answer the phone or door whilst feeding.
- If you don't own a microwave, have a thermos of boiling water ready for the early morning bottle.

#### SOLIDS

- For older babies, for a snack that's easy to hold, core and peel an apple. They can then hold slices through the hole and don't get so frustrated trying to hold a slippery apple.
- You can make up ice-cube trays of vegies and freeze them.
- Some pointers about feeding:
  - better not to bribe to eat, better to gain their confidence by following your good habits
  - better not to discuss your food dislikes in front of children
  - avoid getting angry — it takes their attention away from eating — be happy about meal times
  - give nutritious snacks like frozen yoghurt; fruit in an ice-cream cone; muffins; fruit sticks; wholemeal bread.
- Having a favourite bib or spoon may encourage them to eat.
- Children are fussy eaters sometimes if they are getting teeth or are tired or a bit coldy.

### SOLIDS (cont.)

- If they don't want to eat, make sure they drink lots of fruit juice.
- Stewed fruit, frozen in bulk in ice-cube trays and then stored in bags are great time savers. Sometimes you can get SPC natural fruit on special to puree and freeze also.

## PERFECT POTIONS/MEDICINAL MAYHEM

### CRACKED NIPPLES

- leave maternity bra off at night to allow nipples to air
- use ice cube in a handkerchief on nipple to numb it
- Bepanthen cream – use very sparingly
- Topless sunbathing
- Raylamp or hairdryer (use wisely)
- Paw Paw cream
- Rub in breastmilk
- Contact Nursing Mothers' Association Counselling Service

### COLIC

- Andrew Place, Bundoora Pharmacy – colic mixture
- Gaviscon
- Camomile tea – 30ml before a feed
- Royal Childrens Hospital colic mixture
- Don't burp in middle of feed – lie on tummy after feed (the babies, not you...)
- Grape water
- Lay on tummy over father's arm (lengthwise) whilst walking
- Posture feed in a.m. if breastfed

### NAPPY RASH

- unperfumed disposables can help, or cause it
- Elizabeth Arden 8 hour cream
- Naprash
- Zinc and Castor Oil
- Zinc Cream
- Gentian Violet if very bad – only occasionally
- Covitol
- Am-O-Lin

- Mums differ on the 'time' to introduce solids. Some babies need them earlier than others. You might like to try putting cereal into their bottles (although it is hard getting it through the teat) or giving them a teaspoon after their bottle if they're not sleeping properly.

### NAPPY RASH (cont.)

- Rawleighs Antiseptic Salve
- Paw Paw ointment
- Don't use Wet Ones
- Leave nappies off
- Ungvita Vitamin A cream
- Sigma Nappy Rash powder
- Pinetarsol in the bath

### YOU

- Time off • A relaxing drink
- Remember when you've got time off with a relaxing drink that breastfeeding is not a sure-fire contraceptive!

### TEETHING & PAIN RELIEF

- SM33 • Bonjella
- Icy teething ring
- Rub baby panadol on gums
- Ora-sed jel
- Cold carrot or celery from fridge
- Panadol • Tempra • Paraspin
- Teething Elixir (Spencer's Chemist Watsonia only)

### RUNNY NOSES & COUGHS

- Sudafed • Dimetap • Actifed CC
- Vaselox • Drixine drops
- Vaporiser in room (leave window or door open)
- Eucy Bear rub • Tempra
- Vicks on feet (for babies rub a little vaseline on first to prevent burning skin). Put socks on over feet and it will go right through their body and relieve coughing and clogged up breathing.

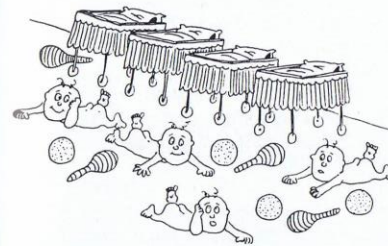
## HANDY HINTS

### PRAMS & STROLLERS

- It might be wise to wait until your babies are born before buying your pram.
- Clamps are available to make two single strollers into a double stroller (from our Club), however, they will usually not fit through a normal doorway. Great for just walking though.
- The McLaren umbrella strollers are very light, easy to pack up and manoeuvrable, however, they do not have storm covers or shopping bag attachments.
- The 'Trading Post' and our Club newsletter are two of the best places to look for prams and strollers.

### NURSERY FURNITURE

- The 'Trading Post' is a great place to look for bargains, but be quick!
- One large cot might suffice for a while if that is all you have.
- Make sure the change table is very safe and won't rock. One with side pockets is an idea.
- Putting babies' clothes into the wardrobe in sizes and seasons really helps you when cleaning out and re-shuffling.
- A 'mosquito' net is great when taking the babies outside on a picnic, or even camping. Net curtaining is also good.
- A heater and a vapouriser may be good standard items for the 'cold in the nose' times.



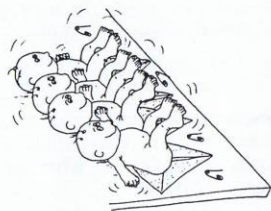
### NAPPIES

- Night-time nappy liners are great. Available from most stores. Takes urine away from bottoms, helps nappy rash.
- Have a pedal bin under the change table for used nappies. Empty every morning and then during the day. Just soak the used nappies in it using white king and eucalyptus oil.
- Nappy Wash is not a luxury. Lots of Club mums used it.
- Always take some plastic bags out with you to use for nappies.
- Fold the nappies in the shape you use them in your spare time!
- Some mums think a full load of nappies is better, others think smaller loads are easier. Do what suits you best.
- When rinsing nappies, wear gloves and an apron. Put barrier cream on hands, especially when changing morning nappies.
- A scrubbing brush helps to clean dirty nappies.
- Hang nappies sideways or in half, to fill the line to its limit.
- Rub nappy pins through hair, or jumper or carpet so they are easier to put through nappies.
- One mum purchased a Decor Picnic Hamper to use as a nappy bucket – two strong handles for balance and it holds a day of twins nappies.
- You could use bottle sterilising solution to soak nappies in.
- Some mums used the dryer for nappies, especially if 'thrip' or other nasties were around.
- Hang baby outfits on their hangers on the line as it saves ironing. Only iron what is absolutely necessary.

## HANDY HINTS (cont.)

### NAPPIES (cont.)

- It is a good idea to hang washing out at night - it saves time. Also, the nappy line is a good spot of entertainment for babies.
- Disposables are great for outings or holidays. The expense is worth the convenience and the break from washing.

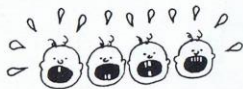


### TEETHING

- Disturbed nights are to be expected, often with only one baby.
- Expect red cheeks, bad runny nose, runny nappies (smelling of ammonia). Put vinegar in final nappy rinse to get rid of smell.
- Babies sometimes require a bib full-time when teething.
- Some babies continually put their fingers in their mouth when teething (a sign that teeth are coming). Teething rings may help.
- Eye teeth and molars may cause the most problems. Remember teeth appear at a different rate, even between multiples. There are no benefits or otherwise with timing of teeth. Be calm, and help babies through an uncomfortable time.

### BATHING:

- Bath every second day, both on the same day.
- When tiny, use a basin to save your back.
- When bathing babies, it may save your back to put them into 'frazier chairs' in the bath. They have safety straps, are all plastic and won't tip. The water can still get to their bottoms and they can have a good kick without you holding them. They can also bath together, which is nice for them.
- Put one baby in a high chair in the bathroom whilst you bathe the other one.
- If babies are allergic to soap, there are some excellent bath oils on the market - i.e. Ego and Pinetarsol.
- Cover hot tap if you're worried about babies playing with it.
- Babies 'usually' cry in the bath up until 6 months of age. Then they 'usually' cry when you take them out! Ugh!
- For unhappy babies in the bath, some mums had a deeper than normal, quite hot bath, and put babies on their tummies.
- As the babies get older, introduce them to the big bath and have a change mat on the floor set up with everything you need, so when they are old enough to go in together (when sitting up) you can still keep your eye on the one in the bath while you dry and dress the other.



## HANDY HINTS (cont.)

### CAR TRAVEL

- If babies are poor travellers, put into reclining type car seats, pad headrest with nappies. Meticulous care should be taken with regard to any form of travelling with babies, especially in view of the new laws about babies in capsules, i.e. babies travelling in either Council capsules, ones made by Safe-N-Sound or those manufactured by Steelcraft.
- It is wise never to feed whilst travelling in the car.
- It is wise never to change babies whilst travelling in the car. Take the time to stop for a break and do it.
- Check all car locks. Always make sure doors are properly closed.
- Cassette tapes with music from playschool etc. have an excellent calming effect on babies.
- Don't leave car seat buckles in the sun.
- Always have extra water (sterilised) in the car.
- When a little older, stable tables may be good for littlies to lay their books or cards on (available from department stores, about \$10.00 each).

### CLEANING THE HOUSE

- Only clean house superficially - nobody will 'check behind the couch'
- Wash floors on your way out (leave the mop in the bucket).
- It is a nice feeling to have a clean, tidy house and it can be done with multiples - but maybe not as often as before. Be happy with your babies, spend time with them when you are able, perhaps they could watch you do the ironing. Note: Vacuum cleaners may scare the pants off some babies.
- Vacuum high chairs when you do the rest of the house.

### CLEANING THE HOUSE (cont.)

- Eucalyptus oil is great for getting smudgy marks off walls, is great for your sinuses and is also good for washing. Three jobs in one!
- Opening a window is sometimes as good as dusting.



### GETTING OUT:

- Doesn't have to mean a car expedition - use your pram. There's not so much packing up; people will talk to you on the way; usually peace from the babies; fresh air and great exercise to work out any problems you may be having.
- Our Club offers friendship and a night out. You can sit and listen, or join the committee - it's all up to you.
- Make the evening meal in the morning, so you avoid the evening hassles. Remember, you can go out for tea and take the babies with you, if you are organised.
- Take porta cots and porta chairs out with you so you can enjoy your day without grizzly children.
- Always have an extra change with you for accidents.
- Put babies in cots just before you go out so you can dress in relative peace.
- Have a picnic in the back garden!

## HANDY HINTS (cont.)

### SHOPPING

- Utilise late night shopping, taking one or no babies.
- If possible, take someone with you if you have to take babies with you.
- When babies are walking, use a shopping jeep so your hands are freer.
- Use home delivery where possible.
- If shopping with pram, use the supermarkets with wide clear aisles, i.e. Safeway.
- Use the babysitting club so you can shop in peace.

### COOKING

- If someone offers to buy you something you'd like, say you'd prefer an 'evening meal'.
- You could buy a freezer before babies are born and begin to stock it.
- You could buy a microwave and learn how to use it, (middle of the night Milo and warmed bottles and/or cereal for THEM). Unfreezes and cooks frozen casseroles in a wink!
- Keep meals simple and remember if breastfeeding to keep to a well-balanced diet. The occasional take-away is okay.

### RETURNING TO THE WORKFORCE

- Try to acquire the services of a cleaner and/or ironer.
- Look closely into all child care facilities. There is a wide range available depending on the sort of hours you work. Contact your local Council for details also.
- Hubby must pull his weight when you are not at home all the time to cope with household chores.
- Some mums thought a 'routine' was their lifesaver.
- Doonas and fitted sheets make bed making easier.

### RETURNING TO WORK (cont.)

- Clean the shower and bath while you're in it!
- Do a few things at once – to enable yourself to have 'free' time later on.
- There are many good books on mums returning to the workforce – invest in a couple, or look in at your library for some.

### GENERAL

- Father could take 4 to 6 weeks off work as soon as babies come home from hospital. If not possible, see if someone can 'live in' with mum for six weeks to help establish routine.
- Some mums prior to multiples' birth spent lots of time with other toddlers, eg. toddler gym, swimming, knowing these may be curtailed later.
- Rest in some form DAILY.
- Gather and accept offers of clothing from friends and keep lists of these.
- Organise nursery with bassinets, sheets, blankets, etc.
- Pack suitcase (including notepaper, money for phone calls, thank you cards, pens and books). You could also include sultanas, muesli bars, balloons, hair clips as surprises for other toddlers.
- Enjoy your stay in hospital (some mums said it was the only time they got to pluck their eyebrows!).
- Accept Paediatrician's advice to encourage hospital visits by friends as against visits to home in the first week or two.
- Ring the local high school for a student interested in helping out from 3.30 to 5.30. At minimal rates it could be a sanity saver if you don't have any other help.
- In hot weather, a moist flannel held in babies' hands may calm them, especially if they are teething.

## HANDY HINTS (cont.)

### GENERAL (cont.)

- At injection time, try to have a friend go along with you, to help hold babies but also in case you or the babies have a reaction. A dose of Panadol Elixer can help if a reaction occurs.
- The bond of multiples is to be respected and not sacrificed for self-sufficiency. Remember they are individuals – try not to compare – encourage instead of criticise.
- On the question of dressing alike or differently, it is personal choice. It is certainly easier to dress them alike, it makes the choice of only one outfit for the day easier than trying to decide on different things, washing is easier, etc.
- With identical twins the question of identity may arise. It is your choice as to whether one always wears red or blue. Sometimes others may only know them apart by the colours, which in the case of identicals, may in fact be the only way they could know (even dad). Ask the children as they grow what they would like to do. Treat it as an interesting situation, not a problem.
- Don't buy too many clothes before they're born. Buy 1½ times, not twice as many.
- You may have a problem with severe body itching whilst pregnant. Ice-water or pinetarsol may help. Also sitting with legs above you may help. It usually goes after the babies are born.
- If a child has gastro or some related illness, put a garbage bag under the pillow slip to save constant washing of the pillow, especially in winter.

### GENERAL (cont.)

- Pin or clip mittens together to save losing them.
- Colic can be very distressing for all the family. Don't blame yourself, some babies are just colicky. Ask someone else to take over if you can. There are medications (see our Positive Potions list). It *doesn't* last forever.
- Jolly Jumpers and Walkers help to entertain babies.
- Wet Ones in the car are good to clean up with.
- Take spare dummies with you when going out.
- Get a sand pit and/or swings as early as possible.

### CHANGES

- Any change to the child's routine should take place over 14 days to 28 days. It takes that long for a child to re-adjust to things.
- Expect a few rough nights if children have to go back into hospital. Talking, loving and understanding will all help the children (and the parents) to adjust.
- Change siblings' bedrooms as early as possible to allow them plenty of time to accept the change before the arrival of the twins.
- In hospital there is continuous noise, lighting, and people. If your babies are premature, they will also be used to being gavigated (tube fed). When you bring them home, it will take them time to get used to night time and silence.

## HANDY HINTS (cont.)

### HUSBANDS

- Please try to come home from work on time. Take over the handling of one or even both of the babies. Take them for a walk to allow mum time to herself. Lend a listening ear – it all helps. The knowledge that you are there to give positive support, whether in words or actions, is comforting to a mother who feels snowed under.
- A father of a multiple birth is undoubtedly very important, and possibly one who feels extra burdens on his capabilities both at home and at work. Talk out suggestions to cut down the workload and try to get out to dinner once a month. You both need time to get back to the real you, after the children are in bed. Use your time well.
- The odd surprise (flowers, perfume, the winning tattslo to numbers) is a great way of restoring a frayed edge.

### FRIENDS

- Friends can be a wonderful asset. Let them help you, if they want to cook or clean, once or twice, let them. You would want to do the same for them.
- You don't have to talk babies all the time. Perhaps you have other children you can talk about, or find out what your friends have been doing to keep you in the land of the living. Read the paper so you have something to talk about with them. It is worth the effort.
- Admit to yourself and to your friends that at times you find it hard going with your babies – you don't have to like them ALL the time. Talk to your friends.

### DISCIPLINE

- Try to teach the children even from an early age, that every child has a choice and every child must live with the consequence of that choice. You wouldn't believe what they pick up when even very little. Decide from the start how you want to raise them, and stick to it.
- They should try to fit in with other members of the family as well. You are a total unit, not mum, dad, and the twins, etc.
- Some toddlers like to 'sit on each others head' when playing. This was quite common as we talked about playing problems at one of our Club meetings. Just ignoring it seemed the best solution.



## GETTING OUT – Trials and Tribulations

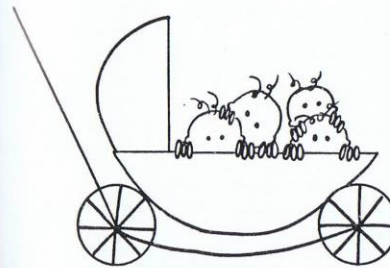
It's always nice to get out – with TWINS, it's the getting out that's the problem! There's so much paraphernalia to pack; babies to organise; things to do before you leave and the dilemma as to whether you have time to get yourself ready before the telephone rings or a baby starts crying or even worse – dirtying a nappy... Is it worth it?

Yes, it is worth it! Friends will always nurse a baby and make you a cuppa. Strangers will always admire your babies and of course, ask 'are they identical' and 'how do you manage' which is your cue to smile and feel very proud.

Relatives will listen to all your problems and if you play your cards right, will offer to babysit while you go and do some shopping on your own.

Most people love to help if they feel needed – so let them. If you stay home, you'll have too much time to let things get you down (I used to end up in tears just about every day I was home for the first six months) and if people come to you, you will end up making the coffee, your routine will be ruined and your visitors will see what a mess your house is in!

*Diane Johnston*



## JOINING A MULTIPLE BIRTH CLUB

When I was in hospital after having my twins, I received Newsletters from several Twin Clubs in the area.

When I got home with my twins, I thought 'what would I need a Twin Club for?' My babies were eating, sleeping, doing everything they should be doing without any problems. I had all the equipment and outside help I needed, so I didn't join any Twin Club.

When my twins were 21 months old I was looking for an outside interest to keep the brain active. I was looking in the local Newspaper and saw the local Twin Club advertised.

I was curious and went along to a General Meeting. It surprised me how everyone got on so well because they had a common interest. They discussed good and bad things, but got a lot off their chests. They said coming to the Club helps to keep them sane. I can see now how you can benefit from joining a Club at an early stage, for support from the members with older twins.

When our babies are still tiny you may need some time to yourself and by going to a meeting, you get that – with a laugh and a giggle to go with it.

*Lynda Johnston*

## TWINS AND THE WORKING MUM

When my twin boys were 18 months old I was offered a part-time job that I couldn't resist. I felt that my husband and I had had a very intensive time with our boys and some time-out was what I probably needed. Financially, it was definitely a bonus with Christmas coming up and savings dwindling as fast as the twins were growing!

My husband (Randy) and I were both happy with the idea of me returning to part time work — as he says ‘A happy Ann makes a happy home’. Our major issue was childcare. Without our family support we had to look elsewhere. I thought my boys were too young for a creche and found family day care the answer. At \$25.00 per day for 9–5 I was lucky to find a lovely lady whose husband was studying so he was home a lot. Her children were at school so they had plenty of attention. The boys thought it was great when her children came home from school, and of course their toys were great.

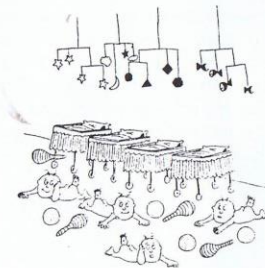
At first there were tears when leaving and picking them up, but after a few times, they settled into a happy routine. Funnily enough I never felt that I was spending any less time with them than previously. I think the quality of time we shared made up for the quantity. They are now minded by a Twin Club member and the boys’ eyes light up when I tell them they are going there for the day.

Overall I have found part-time work very rewarding. (not just financially!) You must be organised though.

- A supportive partner is essential. It would make life unbearable if your partner did not agree with the children being minded.
- Household tasks must be shared now you are both ‘working’.
- Make large quantities of vegies for the children and store in separate containers in the freezer.
- Use disposable nappies for work days.
- Put clothes out on the line in the morning (after being washed the night before) while your partner is feeding the children breakfast (if possible).

- Don’t worry about cooking your dinner on work nights — share the cooking tasks or buy take away — you can afford it now you are working!
- When working something must be sacrificed in your weekly routine, eg. coffee mornings, exercise class, etc. If you don’t, something deteriorates — usually you!

*Ann Boyce*



## THE BOTTOM LINE . . .

It is obvious from this Book that being parents of multiples is a rewarding experience. However, ‘parenting’ offers no prior formal training. It seems to be a matter of ‘trusting your instincts’ and feeling ‘comfortable’ with your decisions.

Perhaps it is the very special love you feel for your very special children that holds the key to parenting. Maybe it is love which helps you to be flexible and to understand that if on the first try your expectations are not reached, that it is not a reflection on your worth as a parent; but rather a sign of your willingness to keep trying ‘for their sakes’.

Being a parent seems to give you reserves of strength, determination and capabilities you didn’t know you had. These illusive qualities help you to protect and guide your children.

Don’t be afraid to aim high, but remember you are only human. Don’t expect the impossible. Don’t attempt the impossible. Don’t be afraid to say ‘sorry’ - your children won’t love you any the less because you don’t have all the right answers straight away. Don’t be afraid to love them too much. They are so very special and it is not wrong to want the best for them.

Be kind to yourself. Treat yourself with respect. Your babies need you, but you must rest and take the time to enjoy yourself by yourself. You will grow and learn with your children. Take all the time you need to get to know them and for them to delight in their mum and dad - their two closest friends.

Your babies are new to it all - perhaps you should give yourselves the same concession. Some would say that it takes a lifetime to learn how to be a good parent. Don’t expect everything to happen at once. Be adaptable and above all,

be sure to trust your own instincts and be guided by them. It’s not to say that any other siblings are not as special, but a multiple birth, without a doubt, gives you an extra dimension to your family that is fascinating and worth all the work and worry of the first couple of years.





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