

# TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT



## *Educating twins, triplets and more*

Introducing  
[www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

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by

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### **Who is the website for?**

This site provides information and downloadable resources for parents of multiple-birth children and those who work with them: teachers, school administrators or educational support staff. This brochure is designed to publicise the website and to encourage its use.

### **Why is the website needed?**

Since 1990 the incidence of twin births in the UK and in Australia has increased from one in 90 to one in 70 births. The rates of triplets and higher multiples are much lower but have increased even more dramatically. The term 'multiples' refers to all these children.

### **Where does the information come from?**

There is surprisingly little reliable research on multiples in school. Both in the UK and in Australia we have used three approaches:

- large-scale surveys of parents and teachers and (in the UK) head teachers
- analysis of data on multiples from national surveys of the school population
- work with individual families and children

### **So is the site relevant to our country?**

One impetus for developing the website was the striking similarity between the results in the UK and Australia. Since its launch in mid-2001, it has proved useful in many countries and is supported by the Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (COMBO), a working party of the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS).

## How does the website work?

The content of the website is very extensive and makes use of pulldown menus and hyperlinks.

The website recognises that no two families are the same. The questionnaires are designed to help families and schools work together on issues such as school readiness and classroom placement.

## Who pays for the website?

The website was funded as an international resource by the Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA), its UK equivalent, Twins and Multiple Births Association (Tamba) through the Cherry Rowland Foundation and by Curtin University. People may disseminate the website information free of charge and with due acknowledgement. The authors welcome information with regard to translation into other languages.

## How up-to-date is the website?

We hope to modify the website at least once a year. One plan is to develop resource material that could be used in a class with trainee teachers to increase their awareness of multiple- birth issues. A "What's New?" box on the homepage will lead you to new developments. It is particularly difficult to keep the links to other websites current and we cannot guarantee these web addresses will be accurate.

## What's on the website?

The website has four main sections, followed by a section with links and with forums, a more formal version of chatrooms.

## Multiple Facts and Figures

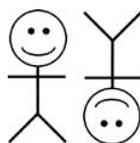
Some of this section is particularly for teachers, to increase their awareness of multiple birth issues such as the chances of preterm birth. There is discussion of zygosity and a questionnaire parents can use.

## Preschool

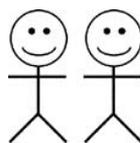
This section deals with some of the differences between multiples and singletons that often appear in the preschool years and are associated with the special relationship that can develop between multiples. A model is introduced to identify the plusses and minuses of such relationships

The aim is to have multiples who have a close and supportive relationship while developing their individuality at the same time. Sometimes the relationship can become too close and sometimes it can become the opposite. The model highlights some of the important factors to be aware of so that appropriate intervention can be planned.

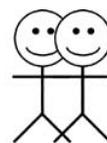
**Extreme Individual**



**Mature Dependent**



**Closely Coupled**



## **The School Years**

As well as the question of separation in school (including a checklist to help in decision-making), this section covers issues of school performance, of multiples in secondary school and provides schools with some ideas about how to develop an appropriate policy for multiples.

## **Supporting Multiples with Special Needs**

Unfortunately there is a higher rate of physical and sensory difficulties amongst multiples. Some behavioural problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are also a little more common and a checklist for ADHD is included. Particular emphasis is put on how the multiple(s) without difficulties manage in this complex family situation.

## **Multiple Links**

This section provides weblinks to:

- Research sites
- Parent organisations throughout the world
- Special interest groups such as loss of a multiple

Forums for discussion about specific questions facing families and schools.

There are separate forums for:

- Multiples themselves
- Parents
- Professionals

## **About the authors**

David Hay has worked with multiple birth families since 1975. He retired in 2009 as the National Patron of the Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA) and has twice served on the executive of the International Society for Twin Studies.

Pat Preedy became interested in multiple birth children in 1992, when nine sets of twins started at her school. This event prompted her PhD focusing upon the educational needs of multiple birth children. She is Educational Research Consultant for The Twins And Multiple Births Association (Tamba) and served for three years as Chairman of the Council Of Multiple Births (COMBO).

## **Local Contact Information**

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