

M U L T I P L E S A O T E A R O A

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**SUMMER 2021
EDUCATION IN NZ**





Contact

PO Box 1258, Wellington
 0800 4 TWINS ETC
 0800 489 467
www.multiples.org.nz

Membership

\$70 Associate Member
 \$50 Full Member
 \$30 Online Member

Advertising

For advertising rates, contact
 Multiples NZ Marketing and
 Promotion Officer, at
marketing@multiples.org.nz

Magazine contributions

Multiples Aotearoa is published
 quarterly by Multiples New
 Zealand, and we welcome
 submissions of articles and
 photographs. These can be sent to
magazine@multiples.org.nz

Submission deadlines

Summer edition: 29 February 2022
 Theme to be confirmed

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 magazine.

Printing

Our magazine is generously
 sponsored by Prestige Print 72 Abel
 Smith St, Te Aro, Wellington (04)
 802 5471 www.prestigeprint.co.nz

ISSN 2703-5638 (Print)

ISSN 2703-5646 (Online)

Cover photo

Caroline McKenzie Photography
 Caroline Doyle and her first twins,
 Thomas and Brooklyn Doyle.
 Photographed at 33.5 weeks
 pregnant with two fraternal boys.

Multiples learning around New Zealand



multiplesnz

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Multiples NZ Executive

President · Heather Ben

0274841526

president@multiples.org.nz

Vice President · Vacancy

Secretary · Bron Dutton

0274258854

secretary@multiples.org.nz

Treasurer · Sally Coombe

treasurer@multiples.org.nz

Magazine Editor · Kirsty Saxon

0211284719

magazine@multiples.org.nz

Marketing and Promotion · Amy Dean

marketing@multiples.org.nz

Higher Order Multiples · Sarah Miller

tripletsplus@multiples.org.nz

Support Roles

Higher Needs Support · Desiree Morgan

specialneeds@multiples.org.nz

Magazine Support

Sarah Miller, Claire Nevans & Isabel Plieger

ICOMBO · Carolyn Lister

Carolyn@icombo.org

Resources Review & Development · Terri-Lynn Mitchell

0277251131

Register, Research Coordinator · Joy Brown

register@multiples.org.nz

Resources Distribution

resources@multiples.org.nz

Archivist · Refer to Secretary

Grants · Refer to President

Patrons · Mary Lambie and James Mora

Medical Advisor · Dr Emma Parry

Pictured right:

Xavier & Lilian (8 years old)

Kirsty Saxon

Methven, Canterbury

EDITORIAL

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi

As a old net withers another is remade

After eight years volunteering with Multiples NZ I am stepping back from something which has been dear to my heart for a long time. As with many volunteers, this is only one of my volunteer roles and I have found it has become harder to find time to fit everything in around our busy whānau as our children get older. I am thrilled to welcome Barnaby from Multiples Kapi-Mana as the new Editor of our magazine for 2022.

The Māori concept of volunteering is the term mahi aroha that most closely translates to the concept of voluntary work. Mahi aroha is the unpaid activity performed out of sympathy and caring for others in accordance with the principles of tikanga to maintain mana and rangatiratanga, rather than for financial and personal reward. How appropriate that is within our Multiples NZ whānau, we have a huge number of wonderful people who give their own time to help. I would like to sincerely thank Heather, Ainslee, Carolyn, for their guidance and always being available when I needed them. Also to the amazing group of volunteers who helped me deliver an amazing magazine each quarter: Sarah, Claire, Rosie, and Desiree. Also thank you to everyone who shared their stories and photographs.

Over the past two years we all have struggled through the unprecedented Covid crisis, and this has taken a toll on our volunteers. As well we have had a smaller number of volunteers to perform more tasks to keep Multiples NZ going. One thing which has remained steady is the passion our volunteers have for this community and it has been a pleasure watching new leaders emerge during this time.

Moving forward, we welcome submissions on any topic related to multiples or anything relevant to our families. Send Barnaby an email if you have an idea for a story you would like to write or co-write with a friend. We are also keen to get your pregnancy and birth stories, as I know we love reading about everyone's individual experiences.

Kirsty



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Multiples NZ Executive

This past year has seen another year of turbulence and uncertainty for our Executive, Clubs and Members. COVID-19 has again contributed to our approach, response and availability for many. We enjoyed earlier in the year a "getting back to normal" with clubs holding events, the Executive having their annual face to face meeting (which was promptly followed that same evening by a snap lockdown for Auckland) and then we have watched and waited in the last couple of months as Delta got in and has now seemingly changed how we handle things for some time to come.

What we have witnessed as a result is strength in coming together, supporting each other and finding solutions - we managed to get funding for online Antenatal Classes which proved to be popular and a great resource not just for those restricted by COVID but also for our more rural and remote members. We as an Executive have worked as a smaller team this year but were very fortunate to have Desiree Morgan step in (co-opted) to assist with project work such as on-boarding volunteers and the Volunteer Awards. Ainslee Jacobson our Past President has also been a lifesaver when I became extremely time poor due to my paid employment and changed family circumstances. Ainslee has been care-taking the President's email and had been the main organiser of NTF 2021. We farewelled Michelle Kitney at AGM 2020 from the Vice President role and this role has remained vacant this year.

Birth Statistics

In 2020 there were 738 sets of twins born, which is a minor increase from 2019 (726 sets of twins). Triplet births dropped to 9 sets born in 2020 compared to 21 in 2019, with the average number of triplet sets born per year sitting at 12 over the past 50 year period. Note these Triplet figures include stillbirths (counting those born after the 20th week of pregnancy), although not neonatal deaths, and have been randomly rounded to three by Statistics NZ to protect confidentiality. The percentage of multiple births that make up the overall number of births in New Zealand was 1.30% (multiples as sets), decreasing 0.02% since 2019 and down 0.17% from 2010, 10 years ago. Multiple birth stillbirths (individual deaths) made up 4.33% of all recorded stillbirths in 2020. Stillbirths made up 1.02% of all multiple births (as sets) compared to 0.58% of singleton births. It's important to note that the stillbirth statistics here do not include miscarriages, nor do they include neonatal deaths.

Multiples NZ Membership

As part of our annual review, Multiples NZ surveys affiliated Clubs to collect their membership numbers. These numbers are collated and used to calculate affiliation fees and voting rights per Club at the Multiples NZ AGM. We are pleased to report that there continues to be 14 affiliated Clubs across the country and that number has been stable now for a few years. Membership numbers are up this year by 16% with a number of clubs seeing significant increase. This bucks what had been a downward trend and where some clubs saw additional membership losses at the beginning of COVID-19 the support network and ability to provide online support during the pandemic has proven to be a strong point for many families to join / stay involved. Our Triplet family memberships remain relatively stable between 20 and 30 families for the past three years and as mentioned above, we note in the birth statistics that there had been a large increase in triplets born in the last year but have had lower retention rate so total numbers have stayed stable. Our Multiples Clubs provide an incredible opportunity for whānau to come together, to meet, to share experiences, to build community and to access multiple-specific services.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)

Volunteer Support

We are now eight years into the Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards programme following on from the success last year we have continued to highlight a volunteer each month with the Volunteer of the Month Award, each month's winner then become the nominees for Volunteer of the Year which is announced along with our other Volunteer Awards. We believe the simpler nomination form and ease of nominating when you want has contributed to the success of this award. The 2020 Volunteer Awards will be announced via Facebook Live on our Public Page shortly, we had hoped to be able to hold our awards at the Gala Dinner at NTF but with this now changing to online we will return to the online version like last year.

National Training Forum

Unfortunately we made the call in early 2020 to postpone our 40th Birthday Celebrations and NTF to 2021. Whilst we have been busy organising this with the venue booked, Gala Dinner preparations in full swing, speakers booked etc it started to become more obvious through late September that we might need to re-think this. The decision was made and Club Presidents advised early October that an in person NTF for 2021 was not going to be possible - instead we are going "online" we are now in full swing moving planned speakers, topics, celebrations to an exciting online format - whilst this will be a big change we look forward to the innovation and learnings this will bring.

Covid-19

A new section in this report last year covered an entirely new concept - Lockdown, Social Distancing, trouble getting supplies, support networks within our clubs and community. This year we have seen Auckland go in and out of Lockdowns and more recently Delta came to town and we now have a change in strategy away from elimination to suppression and learning to live with the virus. Our community has always found ways to rally and support each other and before "lockdown" was a thing our families often did this on the arrival of their newborn multiples. We commonly use social media platforms as a way to connect, share info and support each other. As we move forward watching the changing landscape with working from home, home schooling etc as an organisation Multiples NZ strives to ensure we have a safe place to support our members, be an ear on the hard days, champion the good days and together ride through the storm.

The Coming Year - 2022

As we race to the end of the year and every day we work to ticking a couple of things off the to do list but a few more also creep on. I am reminded that together we have strength, together we have a collective voice, and many hands make light work. We move forward as an organisation knowing there are tough conversations to be had - but with the confidence that only better things can be achieved with open and honest conversation. I would also challenge anyone who has seen something and thought I wish they would do this instead! or why can't this happen, have that conversation, offer to be part of the solution. Too often we think we don't have enough time or experience to make a difference, or we can't do it like the person currently involved. But that is the beauty of our community, it doesn't have to be the same, it doesn't need to be big - everything we do together helps all of us.

All the best, Heather

SHOULD MULTIPLES BE SEPARATED WHEN THEY GO TO SCHOOL?

Barnaby Haszard Morris Multiples Kapi-mana

As a parent of multiples, it's tempting to seek the simple, unequivocal answer to big questions. The reality is necessarily more complex than with singletons because there are more people involved: every individual has all that is particular to their nature, and not only are you trying to weigh those individual characteristics, you also need to consider what the decision means for them as a unit. Whenever there's a big parenting choice to make - like moving them into separate bedrooms, or signing them up for different activities - it sometimes feels like there's an extra person in the equation: the multiples, plus their combined self.

Sending their twins to school was one of those moments for Ben and Rosie Ponifasio, parents of boy/girl twins in Whangarei, who decided to enrol them in the same class earlier in 2021. "We are lucky that people don't have trouble identifying them as they are not identical," says Ben. But the decision to enrol them together was more a practical one, especially in this year of repeated lockdowns in the Far North. "Only one Zoom session. And further along, only one parent's help is needed for school trips."

Fortunately, their twins had no problems being in the same class. Still, a few months into their lives at school, a letter came home asking if Ben and Rosie wanted to keep them together. Like so many decisions we make with children, whether to separate them at school may not be as simple as picking one path and sticking with it. It might need to be monitored and regularly reconsidered, and in this case, the end of the school year provides a useful review point.

"We replied that we'd like to keep them together -- though not if it posed any risk to their emotional, social, and learning journey," says Ben. "An email came back saying they work well together, so they'd be happy for them to be in the same class."

"Rosie is a teacher, and in her experience, schools have generally been for the parents' and children's wishes, unless they impacted the children's learning or behaviour."

Meanwhile, at the other end of the country in Invercargill, Kim Colvin looks back over the school lives of her now-adult identical twin boys Jayden and Blake and is glad she went the other way. "We separated our boys at age seven. One twin was talking for the other, and it was the best decision for us as the other twin came out of his shell," says Kim. "Their school results were still close, even in different classes throughout their school years."

They did have a few classes together in high school -- and that's where Kim saw how different things might have been. "Even in Year 13, their maths teacher would still get them mixed up."

Jayden says he was worried about the separation at first but got used to it. "I made separate friends but always knew I had Blake to talk to after school, and through high school, we would still catch up over lunch. He is my mate!" Blake echoes his brother's thoughts: "I think when we were in the same class we hung out together a lot and didn't interact with other kids. When we were separated helped us find our own friends and do our own thing."

Twin parents who are also teachers get a view of the decision whether to separate from a policy view as well as a personal view. For Melanie Olsen, an Auckland-based teacher and parent of 10-month old twins, school policy has been consistent in her experience. "Every school I've worked at has recommended twins stay together for new entrants and Year 1, then separate from Year 2 onwards," says Melanie. "It is usually the parents' choice, as some twins are better separated from the start."

The Academic View

The International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO) has an article called 'Classroom Placement of Multiple Birth Children', and the conclusion is firm and clear: "ICOMBO strongly recommends that placement of each of multiples be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, that placement evaluation occurs annually, and that parents, teachers, principals and the children be included in the decision-making."

Sternly equivocal, you might say. A call to complexity, rather than the directive parents on the fence might be looking for. It's a view based on research by academics at Queensland University of Technology, who chart the shift away from organisation-level decision making -- i.e. dictatorial school policy -- towards individualised approaches that consider the needs of each set of twins.

ICOMBO's view is also heavily informed by Professor Pat Preedy, whose paper 'Meeting the educational needs of multiple birth children' sets out three types of twin pairings -- Extreme Individuals, Mature Dependents, and Closely Coupled -- before examining the question of separation for each type. Extreme Individuals "usually hate being in the same class or group but may benefit from working together in some situations"; Mature Dependents "cope with all school situations and are happy together or apart"; and Closely Coupled twins "may benefit from separation but can find this traumatic if school is the first real experience of being apart from each other".

In Preedy's words, "there is no simple recipe to decide if multiples should be separated in school." In a six-page questionnaire freely available on the ICOMBO website, she asks parents and teachers of multiples to consider a raft of factors, with questions including the following:

- "If one multiple is reprimanded do you find the other(s) react(s) or are affected also?"
- "Do the multiples combine to be disruptive?"
- "Does one multiple check what the other(s) are getting or doing?"

All of which is designed to help the grown-ups in the lives of young multiples consider this decision in more complex terms than what is most commonly cited, a push towards individuality. But ultimately, the one thing Preedy and other researchers in this field have to say on the question of separation is that it's up to you and your children.



Finding a way through

For Kim Rees and her kids in Whanganui, the decision of whether her family would separate their twins was made for them. "Mine were together for the first two years then separated by the school in year 3 without any consultation," says Kim. It didn't go well for one of her twins, who had been getting a 'Love of Learning' award each year. After the separation, she cried every day and didn't want to go to school. "We have since moved schools, and they're back together and loving it again. Their current teacher says she wouldn't know why they would have been split as they don't distract each other and tend to help, if anything," says Kim.

The decision is more complicated again for parents of higher order multiples. Levin daycare teacher Alicia August's identical girl triplets are very close and do everything together, despite very much having their own personalities, so she decided to start them in the same class. "I am so happy they are able to do this," says Alicia, who has had her three girls at daycare with her through the early years. "They often group together in new places and often wait until one talks or engages before they make eye contact. Separating them in the school environment would be another thing for them to deal with." They are also limited by the size of the school, which has two classes for each year group -- meaning any split would involve keeping two of Alicia's children together and separating the other. "I worry about what impact this would have, especially as one is already left out a bit," says Alicia. As things stand, their school experience together seems to be going well. "They have different strengths and are developing different friends."

If you're interested in learning more on the subject of separating multiples at school, there's a wealth of resources on the ICOMBO website, as well as a summary of the study in this magazine from page 14. Thank you to Ben Ponifasio, Kim Colvin, Melanie Olsen, Kim Rees and Alicia August for sharing your thoughts.



Expecting multiples or already have multiples?

and...

Already have a toddler/s or you don't

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Xavier & Lilian at Kaitaia Playcentre

DIFFERENT KINDS OF EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

www.parents.education.govt.nz

Which type of
ECE will work
for your
whānau?

Moving into early childhood education with your multiples can be daunting, and it is often confusing working out the different types available. There are all sorts of early learning services and kōhanga reo available in New Zealand. They can be 'teacher-led', 'whānau-led' or 'parent-led'.

'Teacher-led' means 50% of the adults who educate and care for children must be qualified and certificated as early learning services teachers. A teacher-led early learning service is licensed. This means they must meet standards set by the Government for the property, health and safety, staff, education and care programmes, and management of the service.

Whānau-led' or 'parent-led' means parents, whānau or caregivers are involved in educating and caring for the children. These services recognise the importance of parent and whānau training and involvement.

Families and whānau have the opportunity to learn more about parenting, develop social and community networks and build greater confidence, as well as lead the education and care of their children.

All early learning services and kōhanga reo are licensed or certificated by the Ministry of Education. This means that they must meet minimum standards of education and care to operate.

Teacher-led early learning services

Kindergartens

Most kindergartens accept children between 2 and 5 years and can have set morning and afternoon sessions for different age groups. Some also offer all-day education and care or part-day sessions. Kindergartens are managed by a Kindergarten Association and have 100% qualified and certificated ECE teachers. They work closely with children's families and whānau.

Education and care services

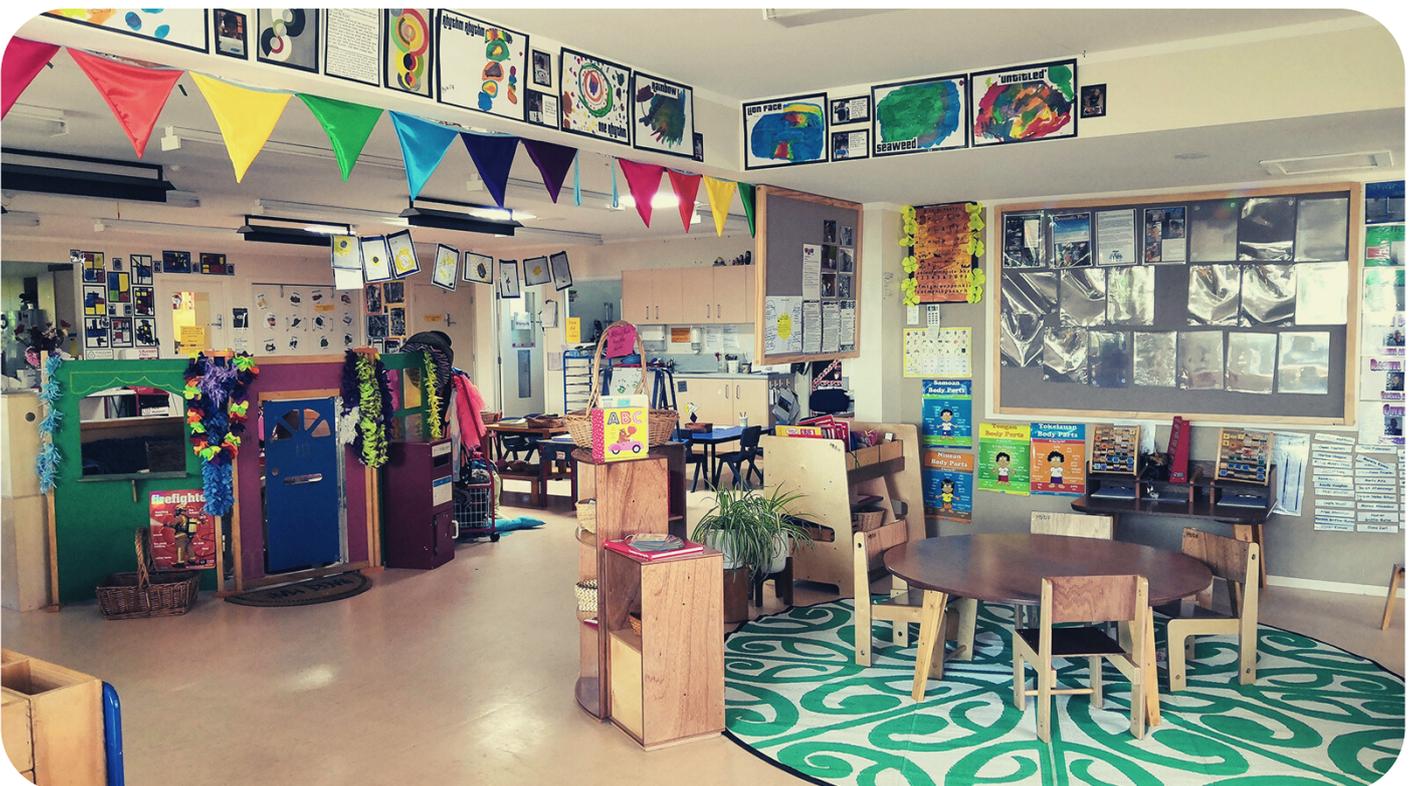
Education and care services run all-day sessions, or flexible-hour programmes for children from birth to primary school age. Education and care services can be privately owned, owned and operated by a community group, or operated in an organisation for employees with young children. Some have a particular language and cultural focus, others have a specific set of beliefs about teaching and learning, for example, Rudolph Steiner and Montessori.

Home-based education and care

Home-based education and care is provided for groups of up to 4 children aged birth to 5 years in either the educator's home or the child's home. Each educator must belong to a home-based service, which provides support through a coordinator who is a qualified and certificated ECE teacher.

Te Kura (the Correspondence School)

Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School (Te Kura) - offers learning programmes for children aged between 3 and 5 years who can't attend an early learning service or kōhanga reo. Te Kura's early learning educators work with parents, whānau and caregivers to meet a child's early learning needs. They also have a range of books, puzzles, games and art materials you can borrow.



Whānau-led services

Te Kōhanga Reo

Te Kōhanga Reo offers a Māori immersion environment for tamariki and their whānau, and caters to tamariki from birth to school age. Te Kōhanga Reo is a movement which works to build rich language and cultural spaces alongside whānau. Whānau are involved in their children's learning and the operations of the Kōhanga Reo. Te Kōhanga Reo remains critical to the revitalisation of the Māori nation. The first Kōhanga Reo, Pukeatua, opened on the 13 April 1982 and since then over 50,000 children have attended a Kōhanga Reo. Many of those children are now parents of the second generation of Kōhanga Reo children.

Playcentres

Playcentres cater for children from birth to school age, and are run cooperatively by parents and member families. Playcentre is your village. See children delight in their surroundings- play with them, alongside them, encourage them to interact with others while you meet other parents and educators. Parents are the first educators of children, and Playcentres around New Zealand foster the involvement of whānau through early childhood education. As a family, and as a community, you'll build your own village with Playcentre: making life-long friends along the way.

Playgroups

Playgroups are community-based groups run by parent and whānau volunteers. Sessions are held regularly for no more than 4 hours per day and are often set up in community halls. To be a playgroup, more than half the children attending must have a parent there with them. Playgroups are not licensed, although they may be certificated in order to receive government funding. Parents and whānau who run the sessions receive information, support and training from the Ministry of Education.

Ngā Puna Kōhungahunga / Pacific Island Playgroups

These are playgroups that encourage learning in and through te reo Māori and tikanga. These are playgroups in Pasifika languages and cultures including Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island, Niuean, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Fijian.



SEPARATION NOT SEVERANCE

Joan A. Friedman, PhD - Twin Expert, Psychologist & Author

I feel compelled to write because I am outraged, saddened, but not surprised about society's disingenuous beliefs about the "twin mystique." A recent experience recounted by an acquaintance of mine has riled my discontent. A conscientious and psychologically sophisticated mom of four-year-old twins decided to separate her fraternal twin daughters into their own classrooms. They had been together the first year of preschool, and both mother and the teachers agreed that the girls would thrive in separate classes. One child has an independent, outgoing, and free spirited personality; her sister has a propensity to be dependent, clinging, and easily frustrated.

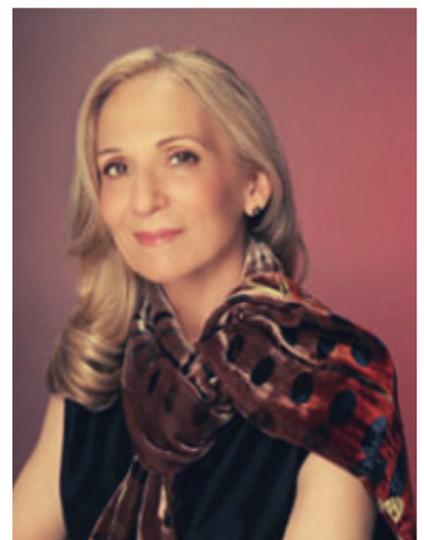
Mother consulted with friends, family and professionals to discuss her concerns and ideas. Mom's fraternal twin sisters validated her decision; they were understanding and steadfastly supportive about their nieces needing opportunities and permission to be on their own. Understandably mom was upset and worried when the class roster arrived. She realized that one twin would be in class with all of her friends while her sister would be in a classroom without any former classmates.

Mother attended a school event prior to the preschool's opening day. Unsuspectingly, she found herself barraged and assailed by other families about her decision to put her girls in separate classrooms. They treated her as if she were committing a despicable crime. Her sole allies were the teachers, who encouraged her to follow through with her plans. The transition has been a bit difficult – however, not impossible, not tragic, and not traumatizing. Many developmental milestones involve a brief period of deregulation. The twin in the classroom without her own friends does feel lonesome, upset and envious that her sister is comfortable and happy. She cried about this with her mom and dad and told them how she felt. However, when her dad asked her if she wanted to be in the classroom with her sister, she resolutely answered no. Her parents empathically support her desire to be on her own and recognize that she has emotional hurdles to overcome.

Nonetheless, the family feels confident that this is the right move for their free spirited daughter. With their love and support, I am quite convinced that this child will manage the challenges and emerge from the experience feeling masterful, confident, and self-assured. For those of you who might feel that it is wrong, unnecessary, or even unconscionable to "put a child through this" and believe that twin separation/individuation issues at this age are exaggerated or unimportant – please reflect upon the following. Many of our children's expectations about their burgeoning individuation are inextricably linked to parental consideration of separateness. Do not delude yourselves into believing that the older the twins get, the easier it becomes to individuate. While in some instances this is true, in other cases it is not. Just yesterday I received the following email from a distraught parent:

"My twins just started kindergarten and are having an extremely difficult time making friends. For all the reasons you lay out, we have been the beneficiaries of having children whose best friend is each other. However, now we see the harm that may have been done, as each girl has no interest in making friends and moreover does not know how to make a friend.."

I can assure you that if you have faith in your child's capacity to handle age appropriate challenges, rationally assessing whether or not your twins will benefit from separate classrooms is not inhumane, insane, or insignificant. Stereotypic as well as mythic beliefs that relationships between twins will be harmed rather than strengthened by thoughtful opportunities for alone time deserve an educated, calm, and thoughtful reappraisal by families, school administrators, and society at large. Generally speaking, it is an uninformed public that perpetuates narrow – minded thinking about twins and their needs for togetherness. What is not appreciated is that twins need advocates and parents who understand that most of us need to experience our singular shining moments undiluted by the presence of another.



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SCHOOL PLACEMENT OF MULTIPLES STUDY

J. Susan Griffith
MD Research Director
ICOMBO

JULY 2020

School placement of multiples was studied by the International Council of Multiple Births Organization (ICOMBO) in 2019, in answer to multiple requests from ICOMBO members for assistance on this topic. Whether to put multiples together or to separate them in school is a thorny issue – one which many families don't have enough information about or have enough support when dealing with their multiples' school. This study was done to help parents and school personnel to be better informed when making decisions about school placement of multiples.

Placement of multiples in school is a common issue universally. This has escalated in the past thirty years with the rapid increase in the births of multiple birth children – due to improved maternal health, fertility treatments and due to women delaying childbearing into their thirties (which increases the risk of a multiple birth). Multiples in school classrooms are now the norm instead of a rarity. Many schools have policies, some written and some unwritten, about always separating siblings in different classrooms. Many reasons are given, such as “too hard for the teacher to tell the twins apart,” but often these reasons aren't backed up by studies or research.

A 24-question survey was distributed via Multiple of America's Survey Monkey account and publicized on Facebook and by multiple birth associations (MOA's) around the world. The survey was written and released in three languages – English, French and Spanish. The survey was opened in October 2018 and closed in June 2019.

A total of 2,842 parents of multiples whose children were three years of age or older and whose children had attended school for at least one year completed this survey. The respondents were from over 18 countries, with the United States, Australia, France, Spain, Finland, Canada and New Zealand being the largest responders.

The majority of the respondents completed the English version (70%), while 21% completed it in French and 9% in Spanish. Two-thirds (66%) of the parents were members of a Multiple Birth Organization. The majority of the multiples represented in this survey (79%) were 11 years of age or younger. The great majority of the multiples (72%) attended public school at some time in their school years, while 17% attended a private school, 10% attended a parochial or faith-based school and 1% attended another type of school.

The key findings for this international study were:

Lack of policies on school placement:

A majority of the parents said that their school didn't have a fixed or set policy on placement of multiples, yet it was often difficult to achieve the school placement they wanted.

Parents' wishes are not always accommodated:

Almost one-fourth of the families who requested school placement for their multiples were denied their desired school placement at least one of the years that their multiples attended school.

A common desire to place multiples together:

Just over half of parents asked for their multiples to be placed together in the classroom at some point in their school years. The three most common reasons were: Multiples wouldn't be happy apart; easier to communicate with one teacher and easier to keep track of school assignments.

Some parents recognized a need to separate their multiples at school:

Just over 40% of parents asked for their multiples to be separated in the classroom at some point in their school years. The three most common reasons were: To help their individuality; one multiple was too dominant; and multiples are too competitive.

The desire of parents to have their multiples together or apart changes with age:

From our study results, it is clear that at younger ages, especially three to six years old, the parents were more likely to request that the multiples be placed together in the classroom. However, when the multiples were seven years and older, the parents were more likely to ask that they be separated at school and this percentage became larger as the children advanced in school.

Gaps in knowledge and resources:

The four most common resources/references used by parents to try to get the desired school placement were: Information from other parents; information from the Internet; information from a MBO booklet and discussions on a MBO Facebook group. However, over half of the parents weren't aware that there were publications, research and books to assist them. Only a third of the MBO members said that they got information from their MBO that helped them regarding school placement. Many districts/states/provinces have laws that protect the parents' right to choose school placement for their multiples, but many are unaware these laws exist.

In conclusion, the clear message for educators and school policy makers is that they should be making placement decisions for multiple birth children based on the individual needs of each child. No two sets of multiples are exactly the same so fixed school policies don't take each child into consideration. Schools should respect the close bond that the multiples have while also encouraging individual abilities and strengths.

Read the full study at: <http://icombo.org/resources/classroom-placement/>





SCHOOLING MULTIPLES

TOGETHER OR APART?

Research from Curtin University

With regard to separation in school, Helen Koch (1966, p134) states:

"There have been endless assertions about the hazards of not keeping twin-pair members apart at school, and the time for disjoining is usually affirmed to be when the children enter school. It is a common belief that twins on entrance to school have, because of their youth, fabulous powers of adjustment and that dissociation from the sibling for a few hours per day will be no more serious than separation of the child from the home situation during school hours. It is maintained that, while in any case, the twin pair will tend to be rivalrous, be concerned about favoritism and being cheated, be given to indulging in self-comparisons and so forth, all this being intensified by the twins being enrolled in the same class and subjected to the constant contrasting that goes on at the hands of their teachers, classmates and school associates."

"The best policy is a flexible policy."

The start of school is frequently the time that parents focus upon whether multiple birth children should be together in the same class or separated into parallel classes.

For many parents, there is no choice as many schools allocate children into classes without consulting with parents or without taking into account the potential needs of multiple birth children.

Our work indicates that both Australian and British parents and teachers frequently have strong opinions about separation. Many schools have policies (written and unwritten) declaring that multiples should be separated in order to help them to develop as individuals or should be kept together, as multiples are a natural unit.



Some schools have rigid organisational policies that fail to take into account the needs of multiples e.g. classes are arranged in alphabetical order or birthdate so multiples have to be kept together. There is no right or wrong answer with regard to separation in school. The needs of each child must be considered both as an individual and as a multiple. No decision should be irreversible and flexibility is the key word both for parents and teachers.

Separation of multiples is the most common single cause of conflict between teachers and parents. This section outlines some of the arguments for and against separation and provides a checklist to help parents and teachers make a decision about what is best for their multiples for that year. It is important to emphasise that no one can ever class separation as "good" or "bad" for twins in general. The issue is whether it is more appropriate or less appropriate for this set of multiples at this time in their development. There may be excellent reasons given as to why separation is the best thing for these children, but there may be just as compelling reasons why it may be the worst thing for them.

Advantages of separation in school

- The children are able to operate as individuals within the class situation
- The teacher is more likely to compare the multiple child against the peer group instead of his or her co-multiple(s)
- The multiple birth child is able to operate without his or her co-multiple telling, particularly if he or she is in trouble
- The multiple birth child has an opportunity to make friends and socialise as an individual (although this may not be the case at playtimes and in after-school activities)

Disadvantages of separation in school

- Multiple birth children may need the support of each other particularly if they have not experienced separation prior to school
- Even if multiple birth children are comfortable when separated, they may need to be able to check up on what the other is doing
- If one child is dominant the dominant child may lose confidence as he or she no longer has his or her co-multiple(s) to organise
- The children may be compared more at home particularly if one appears to be making more progress e.g. gets a reading book first
- The teachers are less likely to understand how the children operate as multiples e.g. being upset if one is ill or in trouble

Does it matter?

Until recently, there has been no good evidence about the benefits or otherwise of separating multiples. Studies done once the multiples are in the school system cannot distinguish whether any problems were pre-existing and the reason for any separation or were caused by the separation. Two recent studies, one in the UK and the other in The Netherlands have shown some negative effects of separation or at least no benefits. The effects were not enormous, but clearly show separation is not a universal solution to issues that may arise with multiples.

**You can access the checklist for parents and teachers
of multiples at bit.ly/3DqBoYs**

TE AO MĀORI



What are tikanga?

Generally speaking, tikanga are Māori customary practices or behaviours. The concept is derived from the Māori word 'tika' which means 'right' or 'correct' so, in Māori terms, to act in accordance with tikanga is to behave in a way that is culturally proper or appropriate. The basic principles underpinning the tikanga noted below are common throughout New Zealand. However, different iwi (tribes), hapū (sub tribes) and marae (Māori community meeting places) may have their own variations. Most people prefer not to act in ways that are offensive to others, so this list has been compiled in an effort to increase awareness of Māori culture.

Heads

Avoid touching another person's head, unless invited. Māori people regard the head as very tapu (sacred).

Pillows

Avoid sitting directly on pillows or cushions. They can however be used to prop up your back.

Hats

Avoid putting hats on food tables. Why? This is linked to the idea that heads are tapu so anything that relates to heads, like pillows or hats, should also be treated carefully. Also hats can be removed during karakia.

Food

Avoid passing food over anybody's head. Why? There are many Māori rituals and practices relating to food. In a teaching and learning context, it is common for Māori to share food as a means of welcoming people, celebrating success, or building rapport. However, another important function of food is to remove tapu so it needs to be handled carefully around things that are considered to be tapu.

Tables and bags

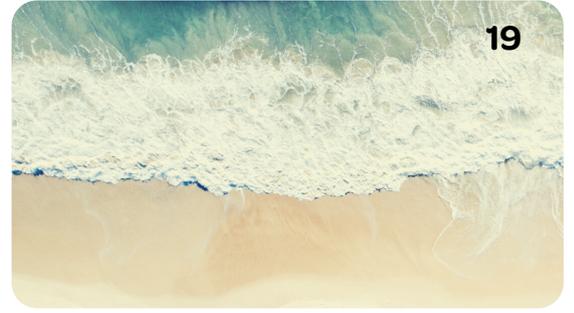
Avoid sitting on tables, particularly tables with food on them or those likely to have food on them at any point. Avoid putting bags on tables. Instead place them on the floor or a chair. Why? Putting your bottom or carry bag on the table is perceived to be unhygienic. Not sitting on tables is also linked to Māori beliefs about the tapu nature of bodily wastes and the need to keep them separate from food.

Speaking

Avoid entering and crossing a room while someone in authority is addressing an audience. To avoid offence, either wait quietly by the door until there is a break in the dialogue or, when that is not appropriate, enter as discretely as possible. Try not to walk directly in front of the speaker or, if you can not avoid it, crouch down as you pass as a sign of respect. Why? Traditionally Māori society is very hierarchical and crossing in front of a more 'senior' person is considered rude.

www.wgtn.ac.nz/maori-hub/ako/teaching-resources/tikanga-tips

TE AO MĀORI



What are traditional Māori Values?

In the past tikanga and traditional values protected the well-being of the whānau and survival of the collective. These values – such as aroha, whakapapa, whanaungatanga, kōrero awahi, mana manaaki and tikanga – continue to make whānau strong today. They have the potential to enhance whānau wellbeing for all New Zealanders.

Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga is about relationships. It is about whānau working together to make decisions and act in ways that support the betterment of everyone in the whānau. Strong whānau invest their time and energy in activities they can do together.

Aroha

Giving with no expectation of return. Through words and actions, strong whānau let each member know that they are loved and appreciated on a daily basis. Aroha is all about giving unconditionally. It is the basis of whānau that are strong, and in which people can live with a clear sense of identity.

Whakapapa

Knowing who you are and where you belong. Through knowing their whakapapa, whānau gain their identity, history and knowledge about where they come from and where they belong.

Kōrero Awahi

Open communication, being supportive. Kōrero awahi is about being able to communicate clearly, positively and with compassion. Strong whānau talk about the small, trivial matters as well as the complex, serious issues in life. Open, supportive communication helps whānau relate and feel connected to each other. It means they are able to really understand one another.

Mana Manaaki

Building the mana of others through nurturing, growing and challenging. Mana manaaki is about upholding people's dignity and giving of yourself to others. Strong whānau offer support and assistance to each other whenever they can, especially in times of need.

Tikanga

Doing things the right way, according to our values. Tikanga is concerned with the safety and protection of the whole whānau, including rangatahi. Tikanga is concerned with the safety and protection of the whānau. It is about the rules, customs and rituals that keep whānau safe from harm, both physical and spiritual. Strong whānau live according to their values and beliefs. They have traditions or routines in place to ensure that everything is done in the proper manner.

“Tikanga are the little things, but they are important – like karakia before going to a meal or going to bed, taking shoes off before going into a whare, and ensuring manuhiri (visitors) eat first.”

Read more at:
etuwhanau.org.nz



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inspire ours*



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ICOMBO Corner

Summer 2021/22

Carolyn Lister
Vice Chair & Research
Director ICOMBO



I have just finished four days attending The 19th International Congress on Twin Studies run by the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS) and International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO). Although hosted by Semmelweis University (Budapest, Hungary) Covid restrictions meant most of us had to join online. There was a small number of people on the ground including identical twins Adam and David Tarnoki who played a key role on the organising committee. This amazing pair are both assistant professors, radiologists and twin researchers at Semmelweis University. They are also founding members of the Hungarian Twin Registry.

As well as the usual sessions with researchers presenting their findings, ICOMBO held two workshops for members as well as holding our business meeting. It was great to get together with members from clubs around the world. We had over around 50 ICOMBO members register from a large number of different countries through Europe, Africa, Australia, Canada, US, Trinidad & Tobago and New Zealand. It was really interesting to see the representatives from Africa were male and twins themselves whereas other countries were largely represented by mothers of twins or triplets.

Here are just a few snapshots of the meeting. The next conference will be in St Petersburg Russia in 2023. Hopefully, the pandemic has eased by then and I will be able to travel freely.

Highlights:

ICOMBO Workshop 1:

In this session ICOMBO members shared projects, research, and other activities they have conducted since 2017. In this session Monica summarised highlights and challenges faced by members as well as reviewing our Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples and how well these were being met around the world. We also heard from:

- Ulla Kumpula about a new book 'Fascinating Twinship – life with twins and higher order multiples' that has been recently published by Finnish Multiple Birth Association. Written in Finnish, it is a multidisciplinary text that deals with the cultural, biological and psychological aspects of multiples.
- Frances Keech outlined how Multiple Births Canada created a successful online conference for their members.
- I presented summaries of the two research projects ICOMBO has undertaken over the last few years. The first one on participation of multiples in research was a questionnaire to gather information to present to researchers about what multiples and their families would like if they are involved in research.

The second project was on school placement. This study was done to understand the issues parents of multiples face and also to help parents and school personnel to be better informed when making decisions about school placement of multiples. More information on our research projects can be found on our website: <https://icombo.org/research/>

ICOMBO Workshop 2:

In this session we discussed the future activities of ICOMBO including work to develop our strategic plan, ideas for themes for future International Multiple Birth Awareness Weeks (next year we will focus on zygosity/chorionicity) and research projects. We also heard from:

- Sharlene Gittens-Francis from Trinidad and Tobago about a really useful book she has written to support expectant parents: 'She's Expecting Multiples: A guide for the friends & family of those expecting twins, triplets and more'. <https://www.amazon.com/She-s-Expecting-Multiples-expecting-triplets/dp/B08L3Q6FZL>
- Pat Preedy who presented about a the development of a new education resource - www.twineducation.org. Pat & John Mascazine have developed this website to assist parents, teachers, and school administrators with questions about how twins and multiple birth children adjust in school. The website is still in development and will eventual have training courses for teachers. A really useful resource is the "Together Or Apart" Checklist for Parents And Teachers of Multiples.

Opening Keynote

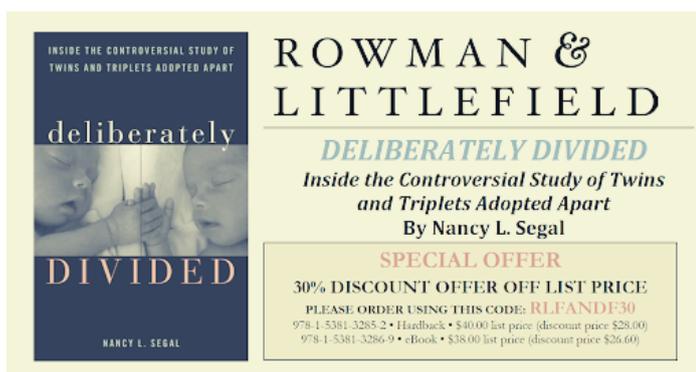
Given by L Scott Forbes on 'The Evolutionary Biology of Twinning in Humans'. This was a fascinating talk and this is the abstract he prepared: The modal brood size of humans is one, but twins, triplets and even higher order multiples fall within the normal range of variation in brood size. Bearing twins has the obvious advantage of increasing the rate of reproductive output but at what cost? The burden of caring for twins, both pre- and post-natal, increases over singletons; twinning squeezes (literally) space within the womb; it increases the demand for micro- and macronutrients. Without access to adequate resources, there is the potential for a quantity-quality trade-off that is common to other organisms. Twinning in humans has both genetic and environmental causes. Dizygotic twinning especially is a complex multifactorial trait that is in part heritable, but also affected by maternal phenotype. Taller, heavier women are more prone to twinning; and dizygotic twinning is more common in older women, where it appears to serve as an insurance strategy for a rising incidence of aneuploidy. Behavioural ecologists would describe dizygotic twinning in humans as a conditional reproductive strategy: those women best able to bear the additional burden of twins are those most prone to twinning, what might be described as a maternal evolutionary 'choice.' The incidence of twinning across the globe has increased dramatically with the advent of assisted reproduction (AR) and some AR techniques, such as in vitro fertilization and the transfer of multiple embryos, are designed to increase the take-home baby rate by bypassing built-in mechanisms of maternal quality control. Twins are effectively imposed upon mothers, rather than physiologically 'chosen.'



Book Panel

On the opening night we had a series of presentations on books all about various different aspects of twins and many of the authors/editors are twins themselves! They involved various collaborations between twins, researchers and others which make these books particularly insightful. Lots of great reading to be had and there is a discount available on Nancy's book.

- *Twin Studies in Behavioral and Health Research: Current Status, Prospects and Applications*, USP Open Books Portal, 2021 Tania Kiehl Lucci PhD, E. Otta and T.K. Lucci (Eds.): University of São Paulo, Brazil
- *Why Are Monozygotic Twins Different: From Genetics to Environment*, London: Elsevier. A. Matias, & I. Blickstein (Eds.) & Alexandra Matias, MD, PhD
- *Deliberately Divided: Inside the Controversial Study of Twins and Triplets Adopted Apart* by Nancy L. Segal, Rowman & Littlefield, 2021
- *Twin Research for Everyone: From Biology to Health, Epigenetics, and Psychology*, New York, NY: Elsevier (in press). Tarnoki, A.D. Tarnoki, D.L., Harris, J.R., & Segal, N.L. (Eds.)
- *Twins - Superstitions and Marvels, Fantasies and Experiments* by William Viney, Reaktion Books, London, 2021



ICOMBO Award for an Emerging Researcher

For the first time we were able to offer an award at conference which went to Sophie Groene. Sophie is a PhD student at the Department of Neonatology and Biomedical Data Sciences in the Leiden University Medical Center. Her research focuses on both perinatal and long-term outcome after selective fetal growth restriction (sFGR) in monozygotic twins.

The origins of identical twins

Jenny van Dongen presented a paper 'Identical twins carry a persistent epigenetic signature of early genome programming'. This was a presentation of the work recently highlighted in the popular press. Monozygotic (MZ) twins and higher-order multiples arise when a zygote splits during pre-implantation stages of development. The mechanisms underpinning this event have remained a mystery. Because MZ twinning rarely runs in families, the leading hypothesis is that it occurs at random. This recent study has shown that MZ twinning is strongly associated with a stable DNA methylation signature in adult somatic tissues. Because identical twins keep a lifelong molecular signature, it may be possible to retrospectively diagnose if a person was conceived as monozygotic twin even if their twin passed away early in pregnancy. If you want to understand more Jeff Craig has written this good lay summary: <https://bit.ly/3wY5Ln3>

Twin Studies: Psychological, Biological and Social Perspective

In this session we heard from a range of researchers including Dr Joan Friedman who is a prominent and well-respected twin expert who provides insights about twins and their emotional needs. The fact that she is an identical twin and the mother of five, including fraternal twin sons, certainly helps. Joan's talk included a mention of her book "Twins in Session". This is a fascinating book and covers a number of twinship issues including twin dynamics, influences and identity. Joan has also written other books that are really helpful for parents of twins.

James Shields Award

Some of you may remember Jeff Craig who spoke at our Multiples NZ conference in Wellington in 2015. He was presented with the James Shields Award for lifetime contributions to twin research. Jeff Craig is Professor of Epigenetics and Cell Biology at School of Medicine at Deakin University, Australia. His research goal is to apply techniques of epigenetics and cell biology to develop biomarkers of health and disease. This includes a focus on the role of epigenetics in mediating the effects of early life environment on the risk for chronic conditions. Jeff has established many longitudinal cohorts in collaboration with clinicians and epidemiologists. Most have involved twins because of their ability to resolve the effects of genes and environments. He is a Deputy Director of Twins Research Australia and is also President of the International Society for Twin Studies and an advocate for twins and their families.

HOW TO HELP ANXIETY IN CHILDREN

Claire Burgess, Family Consultant, Bespoke Family

Guest Contributor

In March this year I was delivering a seminar as part of the Twins Trust Annual Volunteer Day. It was on the topic of anxiety in children but little did I know that when I delivered this talk that we would be heading into a pandemic and that anxiety in not only our children, but also in adults would increase dramatically over the following weeks.

Anxiety is a word that no one wants to associate with their children - we want them to be carefree, happy and certainly don't want them to worry or have anxiety over anything. We need to be aware that anxiety can span over a significant range from mild worry which can be absolutely natural, such as doing an exam or going to a new place for the first time, through to something that can be extremely worrying and can have impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.

What causes us to worry?

To keep this simple, it is all about how our brains work! Our brain has developed and adapted over time, but we still have all our 'primal' instincts (sometimes referred to as the monkey brain) which reacts to the emotions that we feel in different situations. This is where our fight, flight or freeze responses come from when faced with something that puts us into a state of anxiety. As we have evolved we have developed the more rational part of the brain (sometimes referred to as the human brain) and this is where, when facing a situation, we use this part of the brain to rationalise what is happening and why, along with finding a solution. When we worry about something, it is often our monkey brain which takes over and causes us to use our primal instincts rather than going with our rational/human brain. Our children need us to help them manage this and to support them in training their rational brain to kick in at times of worry or anxiety.



What might our children worry about?

Of course there is no simple answer to this question as every child is unique and worries can be very different for each of them, but some of the most common worries are:

- Social media (for lots of reasons including some of those mentioned below)
- Climate change
- Illness and death
- Friendships and peer groups
- School
- Separation from parents or main carer
- Body image
- Safety
- Separation from loved ones – please check out our blog on separation anxiety

We can sometimes feel that a child is worrying about something that in our opinion is not 'worth worrying about', but we need to have empathy with the child as they can't control their worries (which is often the same for us) so, as the adult we need to be there to talk their worries through with them and be understanding as to what it might feel like.

What behaviours might you see?

Behaviours are all driven by the emotions that we are feeling at the time and the behaviour you see is the expression of what the child (or adult) is experiencing at the time. Some of the behaviours that you might see when a child is worrying or is anxious are:

- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams
- Not eating properly, perhaps not having an appetite or controlling the food that they are eating. Often when we are worrying about things we feel 'out of control' so will find ways to gain some control and this can often be with food
- Quickly getting angry or irritable, and being out of control during outbursts
- Constant worrying or having negative thoughts
- Feeling tense and fidgety, or using the toilet often
- Being upset
- Being clingy
- Complaining of tummy aches and feeling unwell
- Being very quiet and taking themselves off on their own

Reprinted from [twinstrust.org](https://www.twinstrust.org)

How can you help?

No one likes to see someone who is experiencing something like worry or anxiety but everyone will experience this in some form at differing points of their lives. We want to be able to give children skills for life in how to approach or manage emotions.

Here are some practical things that you can do:

- Pay attention to your child's feelings – when we feel that someone is really thinking about us and considering what we are going through it can really help. Using emotional language such as worried, sad, angry so that they are able to gain an understanding of what it is that they might be feeling.
- Stay calm when your child becomes anxious about a situation or event – if we really want our children to 'be ok' we can sometimes get worked up or anxious ourselves. The child will pick up on this which tends to escalate the situation further. Keep yourself calm and be aware that this might not be something that will change overnight and will require time and patience.
- Recognise and praise small accomplishments – positive feedback always helps and so recognising small achievements will help
- Don't punish mistakes or lack of progress, this is not helpful and can often increase your child's worry or anxiety, so just be there for your child as that is what they will need the most.
- Be flexible, but try to maintain a normal routine – routine does not need to be rigid but it needs to be predictable - try to keep mealtimes, nap and bedtimes as consistent as you can. This will help your child to make sense of their day.
- Modify expectations during stressful periods – if you know that your child is worrying about an exam, then try to offer them their favourite meals in the days leading up to it to help them feel relaxed and also means that they don't need to be worrying about having to try something new that they might not enjoy or like. Keep in mind that their mood may change quickly and that this is not something that they really have control over at this time - they might not want to talk or they might want to have extra cuddles.
- Plan for transitions. For example, allow extra time in the morning if getting to school is difficult, or visit the new place that you are going to, just so that they can see it before going there for the activity.

The worry or anxiety that your child has will not be solved by consistent exposure to it, it needs to be done gently and gradually so that they have time to adjust and to develop coping strategies. It might be that your child doesn't like going swimming and they become very upset and worried when it is mentioned. In this case look at having more water play at home, making bathtimes fun with goggles or colouring the water, then build up to reading books which have the characters going swimming or making up a story together, then just go to the local swimming pool to watch other people swim.

All of this helps give exposure to the worry and the opportunity for your child to be able to see and process that it will be ok and it is not something that needs to be worried about.

- Think about your own worries and anxieties. We all have them and that is ok, but can your children pick up on these? If so, then you need to be showing them the techniques that you have for managing them so that they can learn from you and understand that it is ok to have worries, but it is much better when they are shared and we have people to help us through them.
- Think about your reactions and approach to when your child tells you that they are worried about something. Try to avoid saying "you don't need to worry about that, that's nothing" or "it will be fine" as this is not going to help and could stop them from discussing it further. Try to look at responses such as "oh dear, I can see you are worried about that, what can I do to help?" or "Are you ok? It looks like you are worrying about something, what's wrong?". By asking these questions you are opening up the conversation and finding solutions together rather than shutting it down as something not to worry about.
- Very often when we are worried or anxious about something we can hold our breath or have very shallow breathing. Doing deep breathing exercises with your child can really help with calming the body and mind. There are some lovely, child appropriate techniques which involve getting your child to 'tummy breathe' check out sites like this one for some ideas: <https://www.cosmickids.com/five-fun-breathing-practices-for-kids/>

Resources which might help

The best resource is going to be you as you are able to talk to your child and be there for them during this time, but there are other things which might help depending on what the worry or anxiety might be about:

- **Dream catcher**

If your little one is worrying at night and also having bad dreams then this might help. Introduce a dream catcher on the wall over their bed and the dreams will come in and get caught in the web. All the nice dreams will float down the feathers and into your little one's mind and all the bad dreams stay caught in the web.

- **Worry dolls**

Your child tells the dolls the worries that they have, puts them under their pillow and the worry dolls take the worries away when they are sleeping.

- **Worry Monster**

If your child is old enough they can write down their worries and then post them in the mouth of the worry monster. Then again over night they are taken away (the parent needs to remember to remove the worries in the night). This also gives you the opportunity for you to see what they are worried about which you might be able to help with. For younger children it might be that they tell an adult their worry, they write it down and the child posts it in the monster's mouth.



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VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

WINNER JULY 2021

Hayley Bomford – Multiples Otago

"Hayley is the ray of sunshine that every club needs. Her enthusiasm for the club and her role is infectious. She never stops striving for the best for all our multiples whānau. Hayley was thrust into the position of New Parent Coordinator at a time we saw an influx of dozens of new members in a VERY short space of time. She took it all in her stride creating so many beautiful packs with such love and care.



"If you need something, Hayley is your girl. She makes time for anybody who needs it, is at the forefront of every event to lend a hand, and we are honoured to have her as part of our Multiples Otago Committee family."

WINNER SEPTEMBER 2021

Megan Boag - Multiples Canterbury

"Megan is one of those people who have been a rock to others during lockdown on top of her regular support. Officially Megan has been a buddy for eight families over the last two years, although unofficially she has supported many, many more either in person, virtually or through her Facebook posts. Megan also really looks out for those who are struggling with anxiety or depression. So many of our members have been extremely grateful for the support they have had from Megan."

"Although no longer on our committee, Megan is still an incredible support person, particularly for those in NICU or facing various other challenges. She is great at finding and connecting people in need and bringing them to the attention of committee members so we can provide additional help where necessary."



Editor's note: There were no nominations for August.
Nominate at multiples.org.nz/volunteer-of-the-month



multiplesnz

Facebook Support Groups

Along with our Multiples NZ Facebook page we also support the following specific needs groups:

- Multiples NZ
- Multiples NZ Neonatal Support
- Triplets Plus NZ
- School Aged Multiples NZ
- Special Needs Multiples NZ
- Multiples NZ Bereaved Whānau Group
- Multiples NZ Public Page
- Multiples NZ National Training Forum Event Page

We support these externally administrated groups:

- Single Parents of Multiples
- Dads of Multiples
- Twins NZ Buy & Sell
- Multiple Birth PND Support NZ
- NZ NICU, SCBU and NNU Parents Support Group

We support our committees through these specific groups:

- Multiples NZ for Committees
- Multiples NZ Presidents Only
- Multiples NZ Newsletter Editors
- Multiples NZ Discount Coordinators
- Multiples NZ Treasurers Only



Multiples NZ



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Club Member Discounters



Find your discount code using your club or member login online in the member's area at

www.multiples.org.nz

KIDS CORNER

10 Summer Challenges!

How many can you tick off?

- 1 The Māori word for summer is:
- 2 How does your family celebrate Christmas? Do you have special family traditions?
- 3 What do older family members remember about their own important milestones growing up?
- 4 Plant a delicious summer crop (maybe strawberries or watermelon?)
- 5 Where is your favourite place to be on a hot day? Set up a hammock or deck chair in a shady spot and chill out!
- 6 What does slip, slop, slap & wrap mean? Why is it important in summer?
- 7 Talk with your family about possible milestones that are yet to come... (maybe as a tween or teen)
- 8 Choose some food (or time) to donate to charity this Christmas season.
- 9 Spot a Pōhutukawa tree in full bloom.
- 10 Make & enjoy a frozen summer treat.

EDUCATION FACT FILE

My School or ECE is:

It's 2021.
I am _____ years old.
I'm in year _____



My Besties:



My favourite subject:



My Teachers:

My favourite Song:



My height:
My shoe size:



My favourite Food:



Favourite game or toy:



Use some colourful wool to measure how tall your child is! Use that length of wool to tie a ribbon at the top of this ornament.
Colour, cut-out, complete & add glitter to make a special Christmas Keepsake.

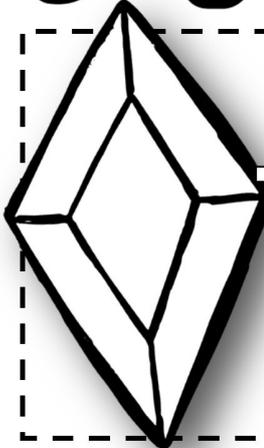
This is a special decoration to hang on your tree,
IF YOU UNTIE THE RIBBON, IT'S THE SAME SIZE AS ME!
Keep this to remember how little I was...

CHILD'S NAME:

YEAR MEASURED:

Meri Kirihimete

THANK YOU TAGS! COLOUR. CUT OUT & GIFT.

You're a
TAONGA
(treasure)
to me.





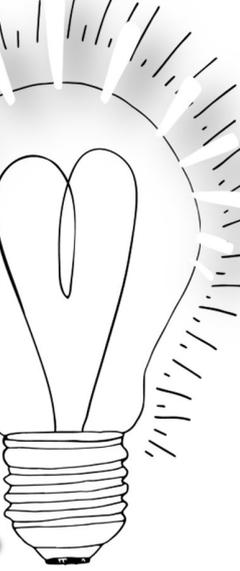
THANKS
for rolling
through
the ups &
the downs
with me
this year.



*You have such
a big heart!*



Your influence has been
WOVEN
through my year.
Thanks for helping
me grow!



YOU
brighten
my life.




Thanks for adding
new skills to
my kete of
knowledge.



STATUS OF THE VOLUNTEERING SECTOR

Post-COVID Recovery and Resilience, May 2021, Volunteering New Zealand

This report provides an update on the status of the volunteering sector as at May 2021. Our work draws on data collected via stakeholder feedback, a focus group with Volunteer Centres and our own research. This report captures the challenges and opportunities faced by the volunteering sector as we move through the post-Covid-19 recovery period. This report outlines our key findings and offers a series of recommendations for the sector's recovery and improved resilience and preparedness for the future.

OUR FINDINGS

Some older volunteers stopped volunteering:

Some organisations that relied on older volunteers are still waiting for their volunteers to come back after COVID-19. With the lockdown restrictions and different alert levels some older volunteers got nervous and stopped volunteering. Some of them have returned to volunteering and some have not because they don't want to have close contact with people.

First-time post-COVID-19 volunteers:

Some people learned about the importance of volunteering during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. They realized they needed to do more and help their communities more. This resulted in a wave of new volunteers to enter the volunteering landscape in order to assist their communities. Traditionally, many first-time volunteers have been newly retired individuals or older people. This seems to be changing with more people across different age groups becoming first-time volunteers.

Funding is biggest challenge:

Community organisations do not know what funding will be available in the short and midterm, what criteria will the funders be looking at, and how the funding streams will change.

Regional differences have become bolder:

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted some of regional differences in the sector. For instance, those regions which have traditionally relied on older volunteers or international students face challenges in recruiting enough volunteers.

Older volunteers have more life commitments:

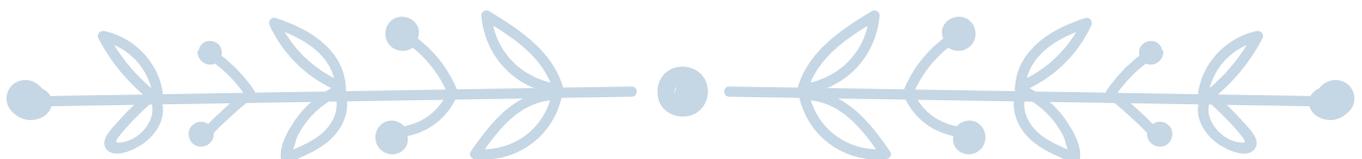
With increasing prevalence of double income families more and more grandchildren need to be looked after by grandparents. This change of culture has resulted in many older volunteers having less free time for volunteering.

Lack of funding means no budget for volunteers' well-being:

Some organisations have absolutely no money left from their budget so they cannot do anything to improve the wellbeing/welfare of their volunteers.

Shifting away from longer-term commitments:

More and more volunteers see long-term commitments as a barrier to volunteering. It seems the demand for short-term, project-based, and episodic volunteering is growing, especially for younger volunteers.



General lack of volunteers in some regions:

There seems to be a reluctance for people in some regions to volunteer. Hence, the number of volunteers has dropped considerably in these regions.

Changing demographics of the local communities:

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, some people seem to be moving out of the larger cities and settling down in smaller cities and regions. This will inevitably change the demographic of local communities and hence, it will have an impact on volunteering.

The Community and Voluntary Sector is under pressure:

Besides lack of funding and volunteers, various organisations in the sector are under pressure:

- Some organisations have seen an increased demand in their services which risks putting a strain on their staff and resources. For instance, Age Concern has seen an increase in older people being isolated and vulnerable and therefore, more demand for companion volunteers.
- Some organisations have seen an increase number of volunteers. For instance, Native plant nurseries seeing increased numbers of people helping out due to unemployment and a higher level of desire to connect to the community. The higher number of volunteers means more work for volunteer managers that are already overworked and under pressure.
- Food banks and community groups providing meals or support for community members are all seeing a huge increase in demand for their services and therefore, their resources are stretched.

Lack of resources for volunteer managers:

There is an increase in appetite for connecting with communities so volunteer involving organisations have good potential to capture this interest. However, lack of resourcing and lack of funding prevent volunteer managers from carrying out their role effectively and supporting higher numbers of volunteers.

Increased use of technology and online activities:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations adopted new technologies and increased their online/remote capabilities and activities in order to attract more volunteers. Volunteers too seem to be more willing to engage with the new technologies/information and online ways of volunteering.

VOLUNTEERING NEW ZEALAND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A national volunteering strategy is created to guide the sector
- Additional funding is allocated to assist the sector with the post-COVID-19 recovery
- Plans are put in place to retain first-time post-COVID-19 volunteers
- More diverse demographics and communities are encouraged to engage in volunteering
- Strategies are implemented to prepare the sector for new and different ways of engaging with volunteers
- The sector requires more collaboration, not only amongst Volunteer Centres but also with other stakeholders and volunteer involving organisations. Collaboration will result in better outcomes for the post-COVID-19 recovery
- The sector should be prepared for future changes in the volunteering landscape
- The sector should be assisted to adopt and implement technological infrastructure
- The government commits to promoting and valuing volunteering and volunteers

Find out more at:

volunteeringnz.org.nz/advocacy/status-of-the-volunteering-sector-may-2021





ARE YOUR MULTIPLES IDENTICAL?

MULTIPLES ZYGOSITY TESTING

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(09) 571 0474 or email dna@dnadiagnostics.co.nz

Results are reported within seven days of receipt of payment and samples, and sent to you by email. Cost of twin zygosity testing: \$250
For more information please see our website: www.dnadiagnostics.co.nz

DNA Diagnos**tics**

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Local Club Contacts

Northland & Whangarei • Rosie Ponifasio-Hughes • 0211653885 • northland@multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz (Satellite Club)

Multiples Auckland North • Thérèse Ellitts • 021 0462398 • president@multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz • www.multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz

Multiples Auckland Central • Anna Winn • president@multiples-ac.org.nz • www.multiples-ac.org.nz

Multiples Counties Manukau • Alison Taylor-Wade • president.multiplescm@gmail.com • www.multiplescm.org

Waitakere • please refer to Auckland Central & Auckland North Clubs

Hamilton Multiple Birth Club • Michelle Ericksen • 078550373 • michelleericksen@extra.co.nz • Fiona Stokes-Rouse • 078563330 • hamiltonmultiplebirthclub@gmail.com • www.hamiltonmbc.co.nz

Multiples Bay of Plenty • Lisa McMah • president@multiplesbop.org • www.multiplesbop.org.nz

Rotorua & Taupo • please refer to Multiples Bay of Plenty

Multiples Hawkes Bay • Vicky Bloomer-Chaplin • president@multipleshb.org.nz • www.multipleshb.org.nz

Gisborne • please refer to Multiples Hawkes Bay

Multiples Taranaki • Sarah Cash • multiplestaranaki@gmail.com

Manawatu Multiples • Pamela Perkins • manawatu.multiples@gmail.com • Manawatutwins.org.nz

Whanganui • please refer to Manawatu Multiples

Multiples Hutt Valley • Claire Sumner Lawry • hvmbcpresident@gmail.com

Kapi-Mana Multiples • Stacey Petkov • president@kapimanamultiples.org.nz • www.kapimanamultiples.org.nz

Wellington Multiples • Georgie Manning • president@wellingtonmultiples.org.nz • www.wmbc.org.nz

Nelson, Marlborough, Kaikoura, South Canterbury, West Coast • please refer to Multiples Canterbury

Multiples Canterbury • Sophie McInnes • president@multiplescanterbury.org.nz • www.multiplescanterbury.org.nz

Multiples Otago • Elyse Blacow • president.multiplesotago@gmail.com • www.multiplesotago.org.nz

North Otago, Central Otago (Wanaka), South Otago (Balclutha) & Oamaru - please refer to Multiples Otago

Southland Multiples • Lizzie Stephenson & Sarah Miller • southlandmbc@gmail.com • www.southlandmultiples.org.nz

Triplets Plus • Sarah Miller • tripletsplus@multiples.org.nz

North Island Regional Contact • Ainslee Jacobson

South Island Regional Contact • Jacqui Newell

Our free phone number 0800 4 TWINS ETC (0800 489 467) is provided by Multiples NZ to assist people to contact their local multiples club. This number prevents clubs needing to reissue all their flyers when committee members move on. It is your number for your clubs, so please use it as often as you like!

MULTIPLES NZ MISSION STATEMENT

To address the diverse needs of families with multiples through networking, education, support and advocacy. Working in partnership with local Multiple Clubs, community groups, health care providers and educators to ensure our values are upheld.



Multiples Aotearoa

Te Takitini o Aotearoa
PO Box 1258, Wellington
0800 4 TWINS ETC
(0800 489 467)
www.multiples.org.nz

