

One Parent Family FAQs

Answers to frequent questions asked by one parent families of twins, triplets or more. You may also like to read Tamba's [One Parent Family Factsheet](#) and [One Parent Family Case Stories](#) that we produced along with these FAQs.

FAQ 1 - How do I cope with all the antenatal appointments and dealing with the medical staff?

Attending antenatal appointments by yourself can be challenging as there is frequently a lot of information to take in, and it can at times feel lonely and overwhelming.

In our survey of one parent families of multiples many said that they wished they had asked more questions and that they wished they had known they could talk to a midwife and not just the consultant obstetrician. (Multiple birth pregnancies are classed as high risk, so many hospitals organise for twin/triplet mums to only see the doctors. However the NICE guidelines advise that each unit should have a named specialist midwife for multiples, so be sure to ask to talk to a midwife as well).

Taking along a trusted friend or family member to each scan, antenatal appointment or tour of the maternity unit can really help you feel less isolated. It also gives you someone trusted to talk through any decisions and will help you feel more empowered.

Writing down the questions that you want to ask at appointments in advance can also help ensure that you are mentally as well as physically prepared for the pregnancy and the birth.

Our one parent families advise that attending special twin or triplet antenatal courses with a friend or family member is very helpful too.

Not all hospitals run special antenatal courses for multiple birth families, but Tamba run a variety of courses right across the UK. The most popular is the regional 2 hour seminar called [Practical Preparing for Parenthood](#) which is run by trained facilitators who are all parents of twins or triplets themselves.

All Tamba courses have a number of places for families in financial difficulty, so be sure to ask if this applies to you.

FAQ 2 - What support is available to me?

Building a support network of friends, family and other multiple birth mums / dads is very important. It is a good idea to join your local twins club and contact your local children and families centre to see what support is available locally whilst you are pregnant.

Once your babies are born, friends may be able to help you with the logistics of getting two or more babies out and about to the clubs in the early days. As one family in our survey said, "A support network of twin mums locally really helped me," and another said, "I wish I had known about the local twins clubs as I was practically a hermit for the first year."

Tamba have an online [One Parent Families Group](#). This friendly and supportive group is a closed private Facebook Group. Everyone who joins is a lone parent mum or dad to twins, triplets or more. We also have a volunteer from a

one parent family who can provide additional support via email or phone. To find out more please email louisebowman@tamba.org.uk.

FAQ 3 - Just how hard is it going to be?

Looking after two or more newborn babies by yourself can be mentally challenging and physically tiring, but it's also very rewarding.

The first few weeks and months when babies feed and sleep in 3-4 hour cycles can be particularly challenging. Getting support and help from family and friends can help ease the strain.

One of our one parent families said they organised a rota of friends and family to visit each evening in the first six weeks to help ensure their older child still had that special mum time at bedtime that was not disturbed by the needs of the twins.

66% of our one parent families who replied to our survey said that the tiredness and lack of sleep was hardest thing to cope with. They coped by sleeping when their babies slept, getting naps whenever they could, ensuring their babies slept in the same room as mum and not being afraid to ask for help.

Just 19% of our families had some support overnight from friends, family or professional nannies such as maternity nurses, doulas or nannies.

Remember that you can also call [Twinline 0800 138 0509](tel:08001380509). Twinline is Tamba's free confidential telephone helpline which is open 365 days a year

from 10am-1pm and 7-10pm. Calls are answered by trained volunteers who are all parents of multiples themselves. Some of the volunteers are also lone parents. Just talking to another twin mum can be very reassuring.

In some areas across the UK, the charity [Home Start](#) can provide volunteers to help. The level of help can vary across the country so be sure to contact them to see what is available.

Your local Children and Families Centre, local churches and community baby and toddler groups can also be great sources of support.

FAQ 4 - What financial help is available to me?

The [Sure Start Maternity Grant](#) is available to help towards the cost of having a child for eligible families. You are eligible if this is your first baby, you are expecting twins or more and you are in receipt of certain benefits. You can claim this up to 3 months after the babies are born.

44% of our one parent families that responded to our survey had been eligible for this grant.

Tamba recommend talking to the charity [Working Families](#) if you would like to know more about whether you are eligible.

In our survey 39% received financial help from family and 39% also got support in buying equipment.

You do not need to buy two of everything and you do not need to buy everything new.

Many items can be purchased on auction sites such as ebay. Local mother and toddler second hand sales are another great source of reasonably priced clothes, toys and equipment.

For advice on buying mattresses and the use of cot bumpers, it is a good idea to read the information on the [Lullaby Trust](#) website to ensure you follow the Safe Sleep advice.

FAQ 5 - How do I deal with my ex-partner?

The end of a relationship can be very

difficult, especially when you have children. There is a lot to think about and to organise. And it can be very hard to think clearly and rationally, especially when you are dealing with newborn or very young babies.

In our survey 36% of our families said they became one parent families during their pregnancy, 13% shortly after birth and 20% during their babies first year.

The charity [Gingerbread](#) has an excellent website with lots of advice on separation on it and the charity [Relate](#) has an excellent guide called A Parent's Guide to Separation which you may find useful.

The advice from our families is that it is important to take one day at a time and to trust yourself and your instincts as a mother. As one mum said, "It wasn't as hard as I anticipated and I wish that I had been less anxious, relaxed more and enjoyed them more." Another said, "I wish I had known that my twins almost helped me. Even when they were newborn it seemed like they knew they had to wait their turn for mummy's attention. As they have grown up they have kept each other company. It's almost like they know it's just me and them and we all seem to work together as a family."

ONE PARENT FAMILY FACTSHEET

These FAQs accompany Tamba's factsheet for one parent families of multiples. It contains top tips that will help with your twins, triplets or more.

HEAR WHAT OTHER ONE PARENT FAMILIES HAVE TO SAY

Tamba have put together a compilation of experiences that one parent families have had. One Parent Family Case Stories what lone parents have experienced in their own words and includes lots of useful advice.

TAMBA'S ONE PARENT FAMILY FACEBOOK GROUP

TAMBA has a closed secret Facebook group for one parent families. It's open to both Tamba members and non-members. To join the group please email louisebowman@tamba.org.uk.

SUPPORT FROM OTHER GROUPS AND CHARITIES

Gingerbread - A charity that provides free advice, training and practical support for single parents. www.gingerbread.org.uk

Family Lives - A national family support charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life. 5% of our families had used this charity. www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/single-parents

Netmums - A popular online resource for mums with local and national information. www.netmums.com

Working Families - A charity that helps parents, carers and their employers find a better balance between home and work. Tamba have developed a number of video clips with this charity on maternity rights and benefits which you can find on the Tamba website in the pregnancy section. www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Thank you for downloading our factsheet FAQs. Feedback from our user community is very important to Tamba. Please complete this survey to help us continue to ensure we meet the needs of our community:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Tambafactsheetfeedback>