

Top tips for getting twins, triplets or more...

READY FOR SCHOOL

Twins trust. We support twins, triplets and more...



As parents or carers of twins, triplets and more it can be easy to do things for them just to speed up the process. Your twins, triplets or more may also be used to helping each other and relying on one another. However, this can't always happen at school.

The tips below are ideas and suggestions from other parents that helped them get their twins, triplets or more ready for school. Remember that twins, triplets and more may develop at different rates. This may also be affected by a number of different

factors such as prematurity, speaking more than one language in the home, whether they are boys or girls, month of birth, special needs and disability, so try not to compare them to one another.

INDIVIDUALITY

GOAL

"I am used to being treated as an individual by others and doing some things separately from my co-multiple(s) and carers."

- ★ Use each child's name when speaking to them, look at each child and offer eye contact.
- ★ Spend one to one time by reading a story together or playing a game with just one child (a rota or timer can help the other children wait for their turn).
- ★ Try to talk to each child separately about their day, perhaps as part of the bedtime routine, so each one knows they will have your full attention on at least one occasion everyday.
- ★ Try to make time once a week when one parent / carer takes out one child and the other(s) stay at home with the other parent / carer, a family member or friend.
- ★ Do not compare your children to each other, instead notice and comment on progress each has made individually.
- ★ Model treating your twins, triplets or more as individuals to other people; present them as individuals rather than as a unit.
- ★ Encourage your children to say "I am good at", "I like", "My favourite" etc to allow them to express their individual preferences.

Twins Trust has lots of tips on individuality on the website including an Enhancing Individuality factsheet.

TOP TIP

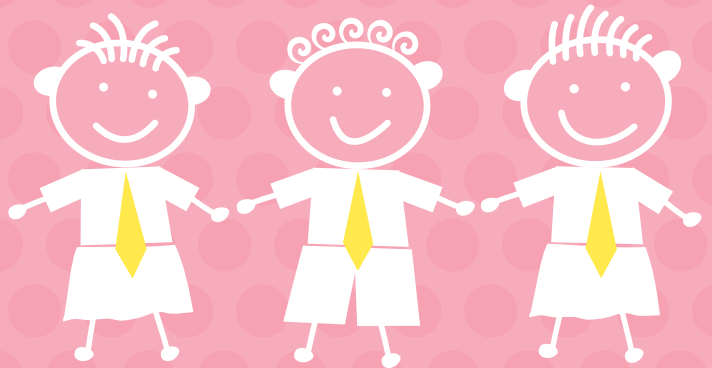
Teach them to have the confidence to correct people politely if they get their names wrong. Encourage them to do it in public (correct people yourself if people refer to them as the "twins", "triplets" or "quads").

SOCIAL SKILLS

GOAL

"I am happy to be away from my parents or main carers and speak to other adults"

- ★ If they attend pre school / nursery try to give them the opportunity to do a session on their own without their sibling/s.
- ★ Talk to them about what to expect when they attend nursery, preschool or school and what adults in these sessions can help them with.
- ★ Give them the confidence to tell an adult (rather than their multiple sibling) if they are hungry, thirsty, need the toilet or are not feeling well and to ask for help if they need it - teach them by role playing these scenarios.
- ★ Encourage them to be confident talking to different adults by providing opportunities for them to talk to familiar adults (friends, relatives) and support them to talk to unfamiliar adults such as shop assistants.
- ★ Organising playdates with children that each of your individual children has made friends with is good for developing other friendships and relationships.



GOAL

"I can follow simple instructions and understand the need to follow rules"

- ★ Encourage your children at home by getting them each individually to follow a simple instruction such as "Please go and get your shoes from the hallway".
- ★ Have boundaries at home with each other and teach children to understand that there may be different rules in different places.
- ★ Encourage children to co-operate with the family rules and to tidy up.

TOP TIP

Try to encourage them to not rely totally on their twin or triplet; this will take time, support and patience.

SELF CARE & INDEPENDENCE

GOAL

"I can use zips and buttons and put on my own shoes and socks"

- ★ Encourage your twins, triplets or more to start to dress and undress themselves by using buttons, zips and putting on their shoes. They can practise by using dressing up clothes and taking their new uniform on and off. Encourage each child to do this for themselves rather than relying on a sibling.
- ★ Practise when you are not in a hurry to go out and give lots of praise.

GOAL

"I can go to the toilet on my own and can wipe myself properly afterwards and wash and dry my hands"

- ★ Teach each child basic independence skills such as how to use the toilet, wash and dry hands and wipe their own nose. Recognise each child's successes and their individual progress. Try to avoid comparing them.

GOAL

"I can tidy up after myself and look after my belongings, such as coats, hats, shoes and bags"

- ★ Make sure your children have their own clothes/shoes - labelling them with names or initials or use different coloured labels, stickers or pictures to tell them apart. Put their names or initials on coat pegs, shelves for shoes and bags.

- ★ Encourage sitting at the table, eating family meals together (wherever possible) - give them examples of good table skills so they learn manners and how to use knife, fork or spoon.
- ★ Take their lunch boxes on a picnic to practise using them.

GOAL

"I can use a knife, fork and spoon and can open my lunch box by myself"

- ★ Teach them to understand and have respect for their own and other people's belongings. Twins, triplets and more may be more used to sharing belongings than other siblings so may need extra support understanding what is theirs and what is shared with others.

- ★ Have a tidy up time at the end of every day and encourage your children to put their toys away or to put toys away once they have used them and before they get more out. Make sure it's not just one of your multiples who always tidies up!



TOP TIP

Ensure that your twins, triplets or more don't get each other to do the tasks for them that they can't do themselves. If one is struggling to do a task keep encouraging them to learn and do it for themselves. Take a step back yourself and don't jump in to help them straight away.

LANGUAGE

GOAL

"I can ask for what I want"

- ★ Encourage them to express their their own choices by addressing each child individually for example, "Jess, would you like an apple or banana today? Thomas, would you like an apple or banana?".
- ★ Encourage each child to build the confidence to speak for themselves and ask for help when they need it.

GOAL

"I can sit still and listen for a short while whilst others are talking"

- ★ Practise taking it in turns to read books together and to listen to one another speak.
- ★ Take time as a family to have one to one time with each multiple, even five minutes a day will help your children.

GOAL

"I can understand basic instructions"

- ★ Use your child's name when asking them a question so that they know that you are speaking specifically to them - try to avoid asking general questions to both twins / all triplets or more as the more dominant or more verbal child may answer for their co-multiples.
- ★ Allow each child time to answer - encourage them to take turns and not interrupt each other.



For more information on language for your twins, triplets or more download the Twins Trust Play booklet from our website: www.twinstrust.org/play

TOP TIP

Find opportunities to ask your children questions and give them instructions individually and encourage them to respond for themselves.

ABC

PLAY & EARLY LEARNING

GOAL

"I can play with other children as well as my co-multiple(s)"

- ★ Give them opportunities for social interaction with friends at soft play, toddler groups and twins and multiples clubs.
- ★ You could try a 'twin swap' with another parent; one of your children goes to their friend's house and one of their children comes round to play with your other twin, triplet or more.
- ★ Encourage turn taking games and sharing, both with their co-multiple(s) and other children.

GOAL

"I am curious and motivated to learn and ask questions"

- ★ Encourage children to sometimes choose different play activities from their co-multiples that suit their interests. It's ok for them to choose the same activity or toy at times.
- ★ Practise counting to ten and recognising different colours, shapes and sizes e.g. big/small.
- ★ Allow them to develop in their own way, in their own time.

GOAL

"I like to look at picture books and read stories"

- ★ Practise making marks and holding pencils by drawing, colouring and painting at home to develop fine motor skills.
- ★ Where possible practise some letters of the alphabet or writing their own name.
- ★ Read with each child individually sometimes as they learn at different rates and give them one to one attention.

GOAL

"I can recognise some of the letters in my own name or even my fully written name"



TOP TIP

Recognise your children may learn at different rates and in different styles.

For more ideas on play for your twins, triplets or more download our Play booklet and watch our videos on play online:
www.twinstrust.org/play

ROUTINE & BOUNDARIES



GOAL

"I know how to get ready and have a routine"

- ★ Allow for the time it takes each individual child to get ready in the morning, take into consideration each child's ability and personality when thinking of routines, as the time it takes each individual to put on their shoes and coat may differ.
- ★ Have a good bedtime routine so that your children are not tired for school.
- ★ Personal actions have consequences. Praise each individual child for good behaviour regardless of whether the other is showing the same behaviour. They will then get praised when they show the appropriate behaviour too.
- ★ Teach them road safety and the importance of holding hands when crossing the road.
- ★ Explain clearly the behaviour you want to see and recognise when they show it by describing what they are doing e.g "Well done Louis, you're walking really sensibly on the pavement away from the road".
- ★ Be consistent - try to keep to the same routine each day so that it becomes familiar to them.

If you need help Twins Trust runs a behaviour webinar which is full of top tips.

TOP TIP

Get organised the night before - make sure children have correct clothes and that their bags are packed with their pencil cases, PE kits, make lunches the night before and store in the fridge.

USEFUL RESOURCES

For more useful information on twins, triplets or more starting school: www.twinstrust.org/Parenting/Primary.

Twins Trust has an Honorary Consultants service with volunteer qualified teachers and educational psychologists who can help with problems surrounding starting school - delaying and deferring, appeals, together or apart, special educational needs and EHC Plans and severe learning difficulties:

www.twinstrust.org/Support/Honorary-Consultants.

Twins Trust also runs webinars on sleep and behaviour for twins, triplets and more:

www.twinstrust.org/let-us-help/courses/parenting-webinars.html.

Twinline (the freephone helpline operated by Twins Trust):

0800 138 0509 Mondays-Fridays 10am-1pm and 7pm-10pm or email AskTwinline@twinstrust.org.

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