MUTLIPLE CHOICE

THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF MULTIPLE BIRTH CHILDREN

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Foreword

The impetus for this survey was the growing number of parents who asked for our help because their twins, who were about to begin primary school, were offered places at separate schools. Parents were rightly concerned that sending their children to different schools was both practically difficult but could also cause them to experience serious emotional and developmental problems. The findings of this survey suggest that around 200 twins are offered places at different schools each year and our meetings with LEAs across England support this finding. We welcomed the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families’ request to the Chief Schools Adjudicator to investigate the problem. We eagerly await his report and the Minister’s response and look forward to the admissions code in England being updated to address this long standing problem.

This survey and the latest results of the well established Twins Early Development Study (TEDs) at Kings College, which are included in this report, identify a far more widespread concern. Tamba’s survey found that around 20% of all twins, who start at a school with two or more reception classes, are split up or placed in the same class without their parents’ being given the opportunity to express a preference on whether they are taught together or apart. Almost 2,500 multiples are placed in this way. Our findings and those from previous studies show that each relationship is unique and therefore children’s needs should be considered on a case by case basis with detailed input from their parents or guardians. The widespread nature of the problem is made more concerning by the TEDs findings, which for the first time, show that separating twins when they start school is often too much, too soon, and can have a long term impact on their development. We await the UK Governments’ responses to this concern but are minded that legislation may be the best way to resolve this issue.

Another significant finding is that a large number of multiple birth children are born prematurely and in many cases it appears to affect how they cope when starting school. Some of the problems might be addressed by delaying or deferring entry to school. These options could be a consideration for the parents of around 2,000 multiples who are born prematurely and effectively end up starting school in the wrong school year. Many of the families that delayed or deferred entry, reported benefits to their children and yet most families do not appear to consider these options, while of those that did, some reported that they were put off the idea by their local authority or because the process is unclear or needlessly complicated. This lack of clarity and flexibility in starting school must be addressed. We are conscious in England that this has been considered as part of a wider review of the primary school syllabus and look forward to improvements being brought forward soon.

Finally, there are a range of additional concerns raised in this report from the difficulties many families have in taking part in simple activities like going to the playground or learning to swim to finding pre-school provision for more than one child at a time and we look forward to Governments addressing these matters in turn. My sincere thanks to all those researchers that have helped with this report – these include Professor Pat Preedy, Anne Thomas, Diane Galloway, Dr Louise Arseneault (and her colleagues at Kings College) and Dr Erika Fraser and to all the families that gave their time to take part in this survey.

Yours faithfully

Keith Reed
Chief Executive
Background Figures
Based on previous birth patterns, we estimate that around 10,000 sets of twins and 130 sets of triplets start primary school each year. We have used these figures and the latest responses from our survey to give us an indication of the possible extent of these three problems.

Multiples Split Up across Different Schools
We estimate that around 1% of multiples are offered places at separate schools each year because of flaws in the national school admissions code. This equates to around 200 multiples split up each year.

Classroom Placement Decisions made by Schools without Parental Input
9.3% of twins and 5.9% of triplets are separated across different Reception classes (first year of primary school) without parental input. This works out as 930 twin families and 8 triplet families - a total of 938 families of multiples. This is 1,860 twin children and 24 triplet children - a total of 1,884 children affected each year (i.e. almost 2,000).

2.6% of twins and no triplets are placed in the same Reception class without parental input. This works out as 260 twin families - a total of 520 children affected each year.

Prematurity and Starting School
40.9% of twins and 83.3% of triplets are premature and this works out as 4,090 sets of twins and 108 sets of triplets - a total of 4,198 families. This is 8,180 twin children and 324 triplet children - a total of 8,504 multiple-born children (i.e. approximately 8,500 children) starting school each year who are premature.

23.2% of twins and 6.7% of triplets who are born prematurely effectively start school in the wrong school year. This equates to 949 sets of twins and 7 sets of triplets. This is 1,898 twin children and 21 triplet children - a total of 1,919 multiple-born children (i.e. almost 2,000 children) starting school each year in the wrong school year due to prematurity.
## Contents

*Foreword* .................................................................................................................. 2

*Executive Summary* ................................................................................................. 5

1. *Introduction* ........................................................................................................... 10

2. *Play opportunities for babies and toddlers* ............................................................. 11

3. *Pre-school* ............................................................................................................... 13
   3.1 Pre-school and multiples
   3.2 Parents’ concerns about educational progress
   3.3 Parents’ concerns about social and emotional development

4. *Primary school admissions* ..................................................................................... 18
   4.1 Local authority policy on multiples and primary schools
   4.2 Offers
   4.3 Appeal process
   4.4 Changing schools

5. *Prematurity and deferred entry to primary schools* ................................................... 21
   5.1 Prematurity
   5.2 Deferred and delayed entry
   5.3 Impact of prematurity on multiples’ educational, social and emotional development

6. *Separation at primary school level* ......................................................................... 25
   6.1 Different schools
   6.2 Separate classes at primary school
   6.2.1 Preparation for separation
   6.3 Multiples in the same classroom
   6.3.1 Benefits of being in the same classroom
   6.4.2 Problems of staying together

7. *Parents’ concerns about multiples at primary school* ............................................. 34
   7.1 Educational concerns
   7.2 Social and emotional development

8. *Secondary school level* .......................................................................................... 38
   8.1 Local authority policy on multiples and secondary school admissions
   8.2 Secondary school offers
   8.3 Appeal process
   8.4 Different schools
   8.5 Separate classes at secondary school
   8.6 Parents’ concerns about educational progress
   8.7 Parents’ concerns about social and emotional development

*Policy recommendations* ............................................................................................. 41

*Bibliography* ............................................................................................................... 43

*Appendix 1* ................................................................................................................. 45
Executive Summary

The 2009 Tamba Education survey collected the views of 939 parents of multiples (94% were parents of twins and 6% were parents of triplets). The online survey asked about the educational needs and experiences of multiple birth children at pre-school, primary school and secondary school level, as well as the additional challenges that families of multiples face when applying for school. The survey also explored whether young multiples have restricted access to play or educational opportunities.

Play opportunities for babies and toddlers

The practical difficulties of caring for more than one child in a public space mean that play activities and opportunities to socialise with other children are limited for multiples. Parents find it particularly difficult to take their young multiples swimming, with 69.9% of children missing out. Other activities that many parents found “unmanageable with only one set of eyes and hands” included: gym classes, playgrounds, soft play areas, baby massage classes and toddler groups spread across a number of rooms. The financial cost can also be prohibitive and play activities offering discounts for multiples are welcomed. Increasing access to play opportunities is important for providing the foundation for multiples to interact with their peers, have fun and learn new skills, but it is also valuable in reducing the isolation of mothers and helping prevent postnatal depression.

Policy recommendations

• Private and social providers of recreational facilities should urgently review how their facilities meet the needs of larger families and especially those consisting of a number of small children but only one carer.
• Private and social providers should consider financial discounts for multiple birth children.
• Local authorities must ensure that their recreational activities meet the needs of all children and families by providing adult supervision to help multiple birth or other families who may not be able to access their facilities without additional practical help (e.g. for swimming, physical activities, soft play).

Pre-school

Three quarters (76.4%) of parents sent their multiples to pre-school (or other early years settings, including nurseries and playgroups). Of the 11.2% who did not send their multiples to pre-school, most either decided this was not the best environment for their children (43.6%) or could not afford it (43.6%). A small minority could not find a place or had logistical problems (17.9%). Only one survey respondent was allocated places in different settings, although several more parents mentioned difficulties being allocated the same sessions.

Although most parents were happy with the care their multiples received at pre-school, 16.4% expressed concerns regarding their children’s educational progress. 23.2% were worried about their social and emotional development. This figure was higher for parents of identical multiples (19.6% were concerned about educational progress and 28% about social/emotional development), largely due to worries that multiples would not be recognised as individuals.

Parents thought that teachers in all education environments (nursery, pre-school, primary and secondary school) would benefit from further knowledge about multiples’ development and how best to promote their learning and well-being, but it is particularly urgent for teachers and pre-school staff working in early years settings where the biggest gaps in awareness of multiple-specific issues were raised.

Policy recommendations

• All families that want their multiples to attend pre-school or other early years settings, but are unable to due to cost or because places are not available should receive additional support from the local authority.
• All early years staff who have oversight of multiple birth children should be appropriately trained to meet their individual needs.
Primary school admissions and appeals
Tamba believes that every child should have the opportunity to be with their siblings at the same school. The vast majority of survey respondents (85.9%) were offered their first preference primary school for all multiples, although local authorities allocated places in different schools to a small minority of parents (1.1%) or no places at any of the preferred schools (6.9%).

Of the 48 parents who were not happy with the school choices offered, just over a third (35.4%) appealed against the decision. The most common grounds for appeal were: need for school with two reception classes in order to separate twins; health; distance; multiples allocated separate schools; and continuity of education (twins currently at infant/nursery of preferred school). Those parents who have been through the appeals process were generally unsatisfied with the information received from their local authority (17.6% thought it was ‘poor’ and 29.4% said it was ‘very poor’).

This survey found an urgent need to develop policies on multiples (both for admissions and for separation at school) and to raise awareness of these policies. Only 10.8% of parents said their local authority had a policy on multiples, with a further 56.9% not sure or could not remember. In particular, all school application forms should have space for parents to state if their children are multiples and if their multiples would benefit from separation (i.e. a school with dual-entry classes).

Separation of multiples at school
Schools in the UK have a wide variety of practice regarding separation of multiples at primary school, which is reflected in the results of this Tamba survey. Almost a third (31.6%) of multiples were in separate classes for the first year of school – this figure is lower if multiples are identical and/or premature. Where there is more than one class in a year-group, most schools (80.5%) gave parents the choice as to whether to keep their multiples together or apart in the first year of school. However, this leaves almost 20% of schools with two or more classes where parents were not allowed a preference: 4.3% of parents said the school insisted on keeping their multiples together and 15.2% insisted on separating them for the first year. Tamba believes that every multiple relationship is unique and should be treated on a case by case basis. The survey revealed that parents were happiest when teachers involved them in decision-making. Open and regular communication between parents and teachers is the key to developing successful strategies for multiples’ social, emotional and educational development.

Policy recommendations
- National admissions codes need to ensure multiples are given the same chance as other children of getting their most appropriate school.
- Codes need to ensure that multiples are not separated across different schools, against their will, and this would be best achieved by making multiples an exception to the oversubscription criteria.
- National codes are the best vehicle for change as they ensure consistency across all types of school and to enable improved inter-LEA transfers/admissions.
- Codes also need to ensure that families who relocate during a school year are given the appropriate opportunity to place their children in a suitable school.
- All local authorities should publish how they deal with applications for multiple birth siblings and should consider whether they wish to amend their own codes to address multiples’ unique needs.
- The use of lottery systems in determining the placement of multiples should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- All school application forms should have a question on whether the child is a multiple. There should also be space on the form to request a school with ‘dual intake’ primary school classes if parents and teachers think this is necessary for social and educational reasons (if parents do not get a place at a school with two reception classes and they have reason to think this is necessary, it should also be a valid reason for appeal).
- The appeals process needs to take into account multiple birth families’ needs.
Recent research conducted by Kings College London (a national study of 2,232 twin children) found that twins separated at the start of primary school at age 5 had more emotional problems on average (symptoms of shyness, withdrawal, depression and anxiety) than non-separated twins. The effect of early separation was still detectable seven years later, at ages 7, 10 and 12 years, and the differences were consistent whether the twins’ emotional problems were rated by the parent, teacher, or the child. Although both identical and non-identical twins experienced long-lasting emotional problems as a result of separation, the effect was strongest among identical twins. Identical twins separated at the beginning of secondary school (age 12) also showed more emotional problems than non-separated twins. This finding did not apply to non-identical twins. Although not all twins were affected and some may actually benefit from early separation, this finding strongly supports the importance of treating multiples on a case-by-case basis.

Just over a half (55.4%) of parents prepared their multiples for separation in the first year of primary school. The most common approaches include: parents discussing the separation with their children; separate outings/activities with parents; different pre-school sessions and/or activities; separate visits to their new school; discussing with teachers the importance of allowing separated multiples to ‘check in’ with their sibling during the school day; different leisure activities or classes; and time apart with grandparents.

**Policy recommendations**

- Educators need to be trained to understand that decisions on whether to separate multiples or keep them in the same classroom should be taken on a case-by-case basis.
- If in doubt, parents and educators should consider keeping children together and regularly review the impact of their decision on the siblings.
- When starting school, educators must arrange the children’s placement in consultation with parents. This should be enforced via legislation – after years of trying to address the situation it appears that little progress has been made.
- Until legislation has been enacted, all schools that have a policy on the separation of twins must publish it as a matter of urgency.

**Multiples in the same classroom**

The majority of multiples stay together for the first year of primary school, largely because there is only one form entry and no option to separate the children (38.2%). A quarter of parents (26.1%) chose to keep their children together despite the option for dual entry and in 2.6% of cases the school insisted on keeping multiples together. Most multiples (67.8%) continue staying together after the first year of primary school, with later separation typically occurred either in Year 3 (aged 7-8 years) or at the start of secondary school. In several cases, separation was tried several times until successful.

Parents thought the benefits of keeping multiples together included reassurance, confidence, security and the value of shared experiences. Many parents thought it was easier for multiples to settle in if they are together for the first year of primary school, particularly if one or more child lacks confidence in social situations. There are also educational advantages as multiples can help each other and discuss their schoolwork at home. Logistically, parents found it easier to deal with the same homework, school trips, parties and sets of friends. Being together was especially important if multiples experienced change at home, such as bereavement or moving home.

However, the survey found that there are also disadvantages to being in the same classroom. The most common problem is unhealthy competition (typically between boy-boy twins) over who is better at schoolwork, making friends and so on. Rivalry between multiples can cause arguments, lack of confidence and one child ‘opting out’ if they perceive themselves to be doing worse than their sibling. Another frequently cited disadvantage is teachers and other children getting multiples confused or comparing them. Being in the same classroom can also cause problems with: making friends; lack of privacy; distracting each other; being too reliant on each other; and the dominant child bossing the other(s) about or answering for them while the shier child may hold back the more outgoing sibling(s).
When multiples are in the same classroom, there are a number of ways that teachers and parents can help twins and triplets feel like individuals. The most common strategies include: placing multiples on different tables or in different groups; different reading books and school projects, and where possible doing homework and reading on a one-to-one basis; different activities, sports groups and ‘houses’; encouraging multiples to play separately at playtime; separate appointments at parents’ evenings; never referring to multiples as ‘the twins’ or ‘the triplets’; dressing children differently; own copies of letters home; and coat pegs located away from each other.

Policy recommendations

- Educators and parents should regularly discuss and review homework arrangements to ensure that individual learning needs are met without setting unreasonable demands on children or parents.
- Whilst precautions should be taken to avoid copying, educators and parents need to be aware that abilities and written work may be similar and is not necessarily as a result of one multiple reproducing the work of another.

Parents’ concerns

Although the majority of parents were not concerned about their multiples’ educational progress or social/emotional development, parents raised a few recurring worries at pre-school and primary school:

- Multiples treated as a unit, not as individuals
- Teachers unable (or unwilling) to understand ‘twin psychology’ or how sibling relationships impact upon behaviour and ability, ranging from closely bonded multiples clinging to each other, one child dominating the other(s), and both/all multiples constantly competing and fighting against each other
- Speech delays leading to communication problems and (especially in early years settings) difficulties making friends and frustration at not being understood
- Sibling rivalry and unhealthy competition over school work and friends
- Emotional and social immaturity, compounded by prematurity
- Difficulties making friends and mixing with other children
- Lack of privacy and telling tales about each other
- Difficulties helping with homework and listening to reading on a one-to-one basis
- Dyslexia and other learning difficulties
- Not getting support with special needs
- Lack of concentration and behaviour problems

At primary school, parents of non-identical multiples had slightly more worries about their children’s educational progress (33.9% for non-identicals vs. 32.4% for identicals) and social and emotional development (40.5% for non-identicals vs. 36.8% for identical). Although parents of identical multiples appeared less concerned at primary school level, the types of concerns were different. Parents of identical twins were more worried about ‘identity issues’, anxiety about separation, multiples clinging to each other and problems making friends. Concerns about non-identical multiples included sibling rivalry, learning and behavioural difficulties and problems sharing friends. Gender was also an issue, with parents of boy-boy twins expressing the greatest concerns about primary school.

Prematurity and school

Just under a half of parents (42.4%) considered their multiples to be premature. Of these respondents, 21.4% said their children’s birthday put them into the wrong school year (i.e. though due after 1 September, they were born a few weeks/months before). However, only 3.2% of parents of premature children deferred their entry to primary school and only two respondents (0.7%) delayed their children’s entry to the following school year, largely due to a fear that their children would find it more difficult to make friends (an already tricky issue for multiples). Some of the parents’ comments revealed that they were unaware they could defer or delay entry or the school/local authority discouraged them. Others said that deferring or delaying entry would have meant losing their place.

Over a quarter (28.2%) of parents of premature children thought they were too young when they started school. Parents raised several issues related to prematurity and starting school early: speech problems;
tiredness; learning and behaviour difficulties; toilet accidents; difficulties getting themselves changed for P.E.; academically behind their peers; and emotionally and socially immature. Of those born in the wrong school year, parents were almost twice as likely to be worried about their children being educationally behind their peers and emotionally immature. 64% thought they were too young when they started school.

**Policy recommendations**

- Parents of premature children should be able to defer or delay their entry to school if they think it would be appropriate – there must be clarity in the regulations/law. Not all local authorities allow this as a matter of course. [A delayed entry must continue for the rest of the children’s schooling up to Year 13: they cannot be expected to jump a year later on].
- All educators should be trained to be aware of the impact of prematurity on multiples’ educational progress and social/emotional development at school.
- Governments should conduct national awareness campaigns which highlight the potential benefits of deferring or delaying entry to school.

**Secondary school admissions and appeals**

Only a small proportion of parents had applied to secondary school – a total of 33 respondents. Therefore it is almost impossible to expand these results to the wide population and we will simply report these findings. Further investigation is required before policy recommendations can be sensibly made. Of these respondents, 15.2% of parents said their local authority had a policy on multiples for primary school, with a further 51.5% not sure or could not remember. The system for secondary schools is currently perceived to be “unfair”, with parents of multiples observing that “education authorities can be utterly heartless and cruel to twins and their parents”. Policies on secondary school admissions varied according to local authorities with some offering a place to the other multiple(s) if the last child allocated is a multiple, not including grammar schools. However, other authorities have a “definite policy on not providing a place for all if one gets one”. Only three survey respondents (9.4%) lived in an area where a lottery system was operating for over-subscribed schools at the time of applying for places. In two of these cases, no places were allocated at any of the preferred schools, while in the third case, one child was offered a place, but the other wasn’t.

Although most survey respondents (80%) were offered their first preference secondary school for all multiples, at least 20% were unhappy with the places allocated by their local authorities. 10% of families were allocated places in different schools and 6.7% were not offered any places at their preferred schools. Of the eight respondents who were not happy with the school choices offered, five (62.5%) appealed against the decision. None of the respondents rated the local authority’s appeal advice as good or very good (two thought it was satisfactory; two thought it was ‘poor’ and one said it was ‘very poor’). Two of the respondents won their case on appeal, two lost their appeals and the other respondent is about to go to appeal.

**Separation at secondary school**

Two respondents (6.1%) sent their children to separate schools. One of these respondents actively chose this decision, whereas the other did not. Both respondents’ children had very little or no previous experience of being apart. The logistical difficulties of being apart were: transport (although not such a problem when they get older and can take the bus), maintaining friendships outside of school, and participation in after school clubs.

Most multiples are in separate classrooms at secondary school, largely due to classes being streamed according to ability and children choosing different subject options. A total of 16.7% of multiples at secondary school stayed together (10% due to school policy and 6.7% of parents chose to keep multiples together).

**Parents’ concerns about multiples at secondary school**

Although 40% of parents were worried about the educational progress of their multiples during secondary school and 29% had concerns about their social and emotional development, almost all of these concerns were not related to the fact their children were multiples.
1. Introduction

In 2009 Tamba conducted a national survey of the educational needs of multiple birth children at pre-school, primary school and secondary school level. Tamba was also interested in the additional challenges that families of multiples face when applying for school. In addition, the survey explored the practical difficulties of caring for more than one young child at a time in public spaces and whether this has restricted multiples’ access to play or educational opportunities.

939 parents of multiples completed the survey, of which 869 (94%) were parents of twins and 55 (6%) were parents of triplets. The majority of multiples were non-identical/dizygotic (71.7%), followed by identical/mono-zygotic (23.5%) and a combination of non-identical and identical (2.8%). 2.1% of respondents were unsure about their multiples’ zygosity. The survey respondents’ children were approximately equal proportions of different gender combinations.

Most respondents (94.9%) were mothers, but 4.2% were fathers, 0.5% were grandparents and 0.4% were other carers. The employment status of parents is shown below.
2. Play opportunities for babies and toddlers

Coping with more than one young child in a public space presents all kinds of challenges to parents of multiples, who are often restricted to locations where one adult can ensure the safety of two (or more) babies or curious toddlers. Some formal play activities such as swimming lessons and gym classes insist upon a one-to-one ratio for health and safety reasons. Other activities, such as playgrounds, soft play areas, baby massage classes or toddler groups spread across a number of rooms are so unmanageable with only one ‘set of eyes and hands’ that respondents often felt they were not worth the effort. Lack of access with a double buggy is another issue (narrow doors, stairs etc).

69.9% of survey respondents have missed out on taking their children swimming because they could not guarantee their safety in the water and changing rooms. Typical comments include:

“My local swimming pool would not allow me to take my twins swimming on my own as they needed a ratio of one adult to one child under five”.

“Started swimming very late due to only being able to get a place for one at a time. Impossible for one parent to take both twins swimming”.

Although most respondents were unable to take their young children swimming, some managed it with the help of their partner or another adult helper. A useful (but rare) solution is crèches in leisure centres with poolside swapping capabilities, thereby enabling each child to attend a swimming lesson or session with one carer. In another case, SureStart offered to provide a family support worker to help a mother of twins take them swimming.

It is also difficult for parents of multiples to guarantee their children’s safety at toddler activities involving physical activity, such as Tumble Tots, Minigym and Gym Tots.

“Tumble tots had to stop after a while as I couldn’t keep hold of both of them up and down the ladders.”

“We started doing a music and movement group but gave up because it really required a 1:1 adult:child ratio”.

“A local council run group will not allow me to attend a toddler kindergym due to me not being one to one!”

Soft play areas and local playgrounds are also “hairy” and respondents commented that they had to be quite choosy about which activities to take their children to, for example only taking their children to certain parks and places which were quiet and enclosed “as it’s hard watching them and keeping them safe on my own”.

“I have to be very careful about which playgrounds we can play on when I’m alone with my twins as most need one-to-one.”
Other less-physical activities, such as libraries, toddler groups and local shops, also presented challenges due to “the lack of eyes to watch them and hands to assist them”. The genuine fear of losing control of their young children in a public space is enough to prevent many parents from taking up play/social activities. The financial cost can also be prohibitive\(^1\) and classes offering multiple discounts are much welcomed by parents of twins and triplets.

Participating in play activities is important for babies and toddlers, as it provides the opportunity to learn new skills and provides the foundation for interacting with their peers. Of equal value is the benefit of these types of activity for parents to meet other adults. Tamba’s 2008 Health and Lifestyle Survey revealed that mothers of multiples experience higher than average levels of post-national depression (PND)\(^2\). Feelings of PND are compounded by mothers’ isolation and feelings of being ‘robbed’ of the typical mother-child bond and activities that singletons appear to enjoy: “I felt cross that I had had twins because all my friends were blissfully happy with their one baby, going out easily to baby massage classes, swimming.” Likewise, some mothers in Tamba’s 2009 education survey commented that the difficulties they experienced finding suitable play activities for their young children “made me feel really sad and jealous of parents of singletons for a while”.

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Policy recommendations

- Private and social providers of recreational facilities should urgently review how their facilities meet the needs of larger families and especially those with a number of small children but only one carer.
- Private and social providers should consider financial discounts for multiple birth children.
- Local authorities must ensure that their recreational activities meet the needs of all children and families by providing adult supervision to help multiple birth or other families who may not be able to access their facilities without additional practical help (e.g. swimming, physical activities, soft play).

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\(^1\) Recent research by Stephen McKay for Tamba (2009) has found that families of multiples have lower average incomes than other families and use up more of their savings following the birth of their children.

\(^2\) The Tamba survey reveals that 17% of mothers of multiples have experienced PND, with a further 18% ‘not sure’. This is nearly double the widely-reported estimate of 10% of all women with children (including singletons and multiples) under the age of one receiving some sort of treatment for PND (Fraser, 2009).
3. Pre-school

3.1 Pre-school and multiples

Three quarters (76.4%) of parents sent their multiples to a pre-school\(^3\). A further 12.4% have applied and are waiting to hear. Of the 11.2% who did not send their multiples to pre-school, most either decided this was not the best environment for their children (43.6%) or could not afford it (43.6%). A small minority could not find a place or had logistical problems (17.9%). It is important that those mothers who want to return to work should be supported\(^4\) and multiples need to have good access to pre-school.

### Experience of Parents Applying for Pre-School Places

- Placed multiples together in independent (private) setting: 55.4%
- Voluntary Aided school did not offer nursery places to all of the multiples (i.e. one or more of the multiples not offered a place at the nursery): 10.6%
- Voluntary Aided school directly offered nursery places to all of the multiples: 0.5%
- Local Authority (including controlled schools) allocated nursery places in different settings (multiples not able to attend the same setting): 33.6%
- Local Authority (including controlled schools) allocated nursery places for all of the multiples in the same setting: 20%

Although a quarter of all parents (25.9%) said their preferred nursery was over-subscribed, the vast majority were allocated places for all the multiples in the same setting. Only one survey respondent was allocated places in different settings. A more common problem for parents is the difficulty of being allocated the same sessions: “We were offered a place and accepted, but our preferred day only had one space, so were unable to accept”. Parents also commented that private nurseries were too expensive, even with sibling discounts: “Cannot get into any local authority nurseries and local private ones too expensive for two at once and no twin discount! So have a nanny”.

A small proportion (5.1%) of parents had used other childcare arrangements before their children started primary school, either in combination with pre-school or prior to starting pre-school. The most common type of childcare is grandparents (2.8%), followed by nannies (1.7%), childminders (0.6%) and au-pairs (0.1%).

3.2 Parents’ concerns about educational progress at pre-school

16.4 per cent of survey respondents expressed concerns regarding the educational progress of their multiples during pre-school. The percentage of concerned parents is higher for identical (19.6%) than non-identical multiples (15.3%), largely due to worries that multiples would not be recognised as individuals\(^5\). Although the ‘twin’ or ‘triplet issue’ is more pronounced for identicals, it also affects similar-looking non-identicals and even completely different looking multiples can be confused or be treated as a unit. It is unfortunately still common for pre-school staff to call children ‘the twins’, rather than by their names. Several parents commented that their children were different and “their education needs to be tailored to them”, which is clearly not possible when staff are unable to tell twins apart or treat them as ‘one individual’. One mother described how “one child was given the other’s medicine”.

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\(^3\) Please note this section refers to all pre-school environments, including nurseries, playgroups etc

\(^4\) Recent research by Stephen McKay for TAMBA (2009) has found that mothers of multiples are more likely to delay returning to paid work (a key factor here is the high cost and lack of availability of suitable childcare for multiples).

\(^5\) Although zygosity (whether multiples are identical) is the most important factor for increasing parents’ education concerns at pre-school, gender is also a key issue. For example, 21.1% of parents of identical boy-boy twins and 17.1% of non-identical boy-boy twins had educational concerns about pre-school vs. 17.6% of identical girl-girl twins, 15.9% of non-identical girl-girl twins, and 12.8% of non-identical boy-girl twins.
“More care needs to be taken over naming each twin correctly. There are sometimes mistakes. Once, one of my boys came home having tried to write his brother’s name rather than his own!”

“Staff unable to tell them apart caused the boys to be very angry at continual mix-ups”.

Parents also expressed frustration at progress reports and parents evenings, either because staff treated multiples as ‘inter-changeable’, assessing twins against their sibling, rather than their peer group, or “obsessing about the twin/triplet issue”.

“When being reported back to, the feedback would be a jumble of info about the two. Therefore I would not be sure for definite who had achieved what”.

“Despite being non-identical, people would constantly compare and confuse them. Sometimes they were more interested in their twin traits than their individual progress”.

“Constant comparison at parents evening. The more advanced progress of one twin unfortunately always reflects badly on the other twin”.

Parents’ concerns regarding the educational progress of multiples during pre-school

- Multiples treated as one unit, rather than as individuals (20 responses)
- Delayed speech and problems with communication (20 responses)
- Slower to progress than contemporaries (14 responses)
- Different progress between multiples (14 responses)
- Multiples’ personalities and educational needs suit different types of pre-school setting (4 responses)
- Twins behavior deteriorating after separation (3 responses)
- Concentration difficulties (3 responses)
- One twin distracting the other (1 response)

Parents were also very concerned about how speech delays (more common in multiples) impacted upon their educational progress at pre-school. Twins are on average about three months behind singletons in language development. Survey respondents who expressed concerns about speech problems and language delays were more likely to have premature children and/or boy-boy twins. Difficulties communicating with their peers and staff can lead to problems mixing with other children, as well as frustration and behaviour problems.

Parents also raised concerns about their multiples’ slower progress than their contemporaries and the different levels of progress between multiples: “One of my daughters seems to be much brighter and she was the one getting all the praise and earning all the awards and certificates. This makes her sister feel inadequate and as she is a little further behind her anyway, this really knocks her confidence”.

Educational needs can vary between multiples and what suits one child, may not suit the other(s). Parents noted the challenge of finding a pre-school setting that was appropriate for both twins.

“My son and daughter have very different needs both in learning and in emotional terms. My daughter’s precociousness has meant we booked a second (more expensive) setting to better suit her needs as she was quickly getting bored with the standard little village nursery”.

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6 In a comparative study of twins and singleton children, Rutter et al. (2003) found that the language ability of twins was 1.7 months below singletons when the infants were 20 months, but the difference had increased to 3.1 months at three years. The study found no significant relationship between language development and obstetric/neonatal complications, birthweight or congenital abnormalities.
“The boy was more active and needed more challenging activities that were not provided. The girl was content with the provision”.

“When the twin who was more able to cope with mainstream education was moved out of the special needs nursery into a mainstream one without his twin, his behaviour deteriorated. They really needed to be kept together, but this was not an option because of their different levels of special needs”.

3.3 Parents’ concerns about social and emotional development at pre-school
23.2 per cent of survey respondents expressed concerns about the social and emotional development of their multiples during pre-school. Again, the percentage of concerned parents is higher for identical (28.0%) than non-identical multiples (22%), due to problems about lack of individuality and twins being treated as a unit. Parents of identical girl-girl twins expressed the most worries about social/emotional development at pre-school.7

“I felt there was insufficient attention paid to the difference between my two. They were often referred to as ‘the twins’ (despite my asking them not to do this) and were the only children in the nursery who had to share a coat peg (as a small example). When one child was ready to progress to the next room (based on development, not age), there was an automatic assumption that both children would move straight away, even if one was less ready. They were equally unhappy to keep one back a few weeks to allow the other to catch up as they were happy to push the slightly slower one. All these difficulties were resolved through discussion, but there did appear to be a basic assumption that ‘twins are the same’. My two could not be more different temperamentally and physically!”

“As they are twins they are sometimes treated as one unit. Staff sometimes have difficulty dealing with identical twins with differing needs and differing personalities – what suits one does not always suit another.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ concerns regarding the social and emotional development of multiples during pre-school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Multiples not recognized as individuals (31 responses)</td>
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<td>• One twin more dependent on the other (22 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Not mixing with other children (20 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Problems with separation to different activities or sessions (13 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Difficulties making themselves understood due to speech problems (10 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Multiples clinging to each other (10 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Immature compared to other children due to prematurity (6 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff have no experience of multiples, especially triplets (4 responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fighting with each other and other behavior problems (5 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulties parting with mother (3 responses)</td>
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Another frequent concern was that one twin was more dependent on their sibling than the other. Balancing the needs of a more outgoing twin with their quieter and more dependent sibling was a challenging issue for several parents, but especially those of girl-girl twins.

“One twin is very outgoing and has lots of friends, the other much shier and has only a couple of good friends. Outgoing twin doesn’t want to ‘look after’ her sister but the shy twin still needs that familiar face and gets upset when she sees her sister off having fun with other children”.

“One of the twins is more emotionally confident than the other and we were concerned over her being left out”.

7 29.4% of parents of identical and 25.7% of non-identical girl-girl twins had concerns about social/emotional development, compared to 27.7% of identical and 19.6% of non-identical boy-boy twins. 18.5% of parents of boy-girl twins expressed social/emotional concerns.
“My daughter was very reliant on her brother and that wasn’t taken into consideration. She even shut herself in a cupboard and cried for the whole session as she couldn’t sit with him. No effort was made to find a solution. She was just labelled difficult”.

Parents were also concerned about their multiples not mixing with other children at pre-school, which can be related to other concerns (their peers being unable to tell them apart, prematurity, speech delays).

“I often felt that they were socially a little behind their peers. They were rarely invited to parties”.

“The boys don’t like to have their individuality unacknowledged, but are too shy (and fed-up with trying to no avail) to keep having to tell staff and other children who they are speaking to. Because the boys have a very close relationship, and don’t really ‘need’ other friendships so much yet, they’ve been left to their own devices a bit, when we’d have preferred them to be encouraged to interact with their peers somewhat more”.

Some parents commented that have introduced elements of separation, for example asking pre-school staff to place twins at separate tables, do separate activities or attending a few different sessions. This early experience of being apart is considered to be a useful preparation for starting school and can be helpful in dealing with multiple-specific issues, such as one child dominating the other, problems with establishing an individual identity, sibling competition and rivalry, and children not mixing with their peers.

Speech and language delays\(^8\) often lead to difficulties communicating with other children, and several parents raised concerns that their multiples were noticeably behind their peers. This problem seems to be more pronounced amongst premature and male multiples.

“Difficulties with communication led to misunderstandings and disputes with peers. Their development was slow, they were immature for their age.”

“My little boy’s social development is affected by his language delay”.

“Speech and language delay meant they found it difficult to communicate with other kids (still do!”

Another worry for parents is multiples who are so closely bonded that they cling to each other at pre-school, particularly if the children are shy and reluctant to participate in large group work. Some parents attributed a ‘close coupling’ and shyness to limited social contact with other children during their first two years of life (see Section 2).

“They are very reliant on one another and being together affects their behaviour”

“I’ve found that they haven’t made many friends in their class, as they exclude everyone else while playing”.

On the other end of the spectrum, some multiples find their relationship restrictive and may rebel against it using negative behaviour such as fighting, biting and shouting, especially if staff and other children exacerbate their frustration by confusing the multiples or making constant reference to the ‘twins’ as a unit.

\(^8\) Research by Professor Pat Preedy (2001) found that around one third of twins have some difficulty with speech or language development upon school entry. In some cases this is a language disorder or specific learning difficulty, however in most cases is simply due to delays in language development which will eventually be ironed out, but may initially affect their learning ability and interaction. There are several possible reasons for multiples’ slower language development, for example: (1) fewer interactions with adults; (2) conversations are often more complex, for example replies from the child may be optional rather than obligatory; (3) one child may dominate the conversation, preventing the other from making progress; and (4) multiples can reinforce language errors. See also Pat Preedy’s chapter and Kay Mogford Bevan’s chapter in Sandbank’s (1999) Twin and Triplet Psychology: A Professional Guide to Working with Multiples.
“Small nursery and boys were left together too much leading to fights, when a short separation in each session would have helped matters. Fights disrupted nursery but were never towards other children, just each other”.

“Few schools have any experience of dealing with triplets and the rivalry issues that arise”.

“They found it increasingly difficult to become recognized as individuals, and therefore began to fight more”.

Concerns were often resolved through discussion and parents thought it was useful for multiples to be allocated different key-workers: “We discussed how one was quieter than the other and my concern that he would let his brother speak for him. They were aware of this and assured me each had their own key-worker to work with and encourage independence”. Tamba is an important resource and some parents commented that they found the factsheets contained useful suggestions for addressing the unique social and educational needs of pre-school multiples.

“Found staff were comparing them to each other, especially in a written report at the end of term. I complained and they denied comparing them. I gave them a copy of TAMBA factsheet and it hasn’t happened again, but I still think they get compared to each other more than the other children”.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policy recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>• All families that want their multiples to attend pre-school or other early years settings, but are unable to due to cost or because places are not available should receive additional support from the local authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All early years staff who have oversight of multiple birth children should be appropriately trained to meet their individual needs</td>
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</table>
4. Primary school admissions

4.1 Local authority policy on multiples and primary schools
Only 10.8% of parents said their local authority had a policy on multiples for primary school, with a further 56.9% not sure or could not remember. A third of respondents (32.3%) said their local authority did not have a policy on school admissions for multiples. Several parents commented that there was no space on the school application form to indicate they were applying for a place for a child of a multiple birth: “I had to write this on the form myself even though there was no request for this information. This needs to be changed”.

The standard local authority policy for admissions seems to be to treat each child as an individual, or in one parent’s words: “Just because one child gets a place, the others are not guaranteed to get one!” Only two respondents noted that their local authority would go over the class maximum to accommodate the second child (both lived in Southampton). There is no standard policy for keeping twins together in the same classroom or separating them, which causes parents anxiety and confusion: “It seems there are no clear rules regarding siblings, especially when applying for schools. It is very worrying”.

A particular problem for multiple-birth children is the long time-frame of the appeals process and knowing what to do if one child is offered a place and the other is not. For example, one parent commented, “We had one place available at a school of our choice, however, the LEA would not keep it open until a second arose and so we lost the place. The LEA will not do anything to help the situation”.

4.2 Offers
The vast majority of survey respondents (85.9%) were offered their first preference primary school for all multiples, although local authorities allocated places in different schools to a small minority of parents (1.1%) or no places at any of the preferred schools (6.9%).

![Chart showing offers distribution](chart.png)

Of the 46 people applying for places in a voluntary sector primary school, three (6.5%) were not offered places. 13% said their local school (voluntary sector) had a policy on multiples. For one of these, “twins were not considered to be siblings”. Another said, “Multiples were treated as one for allocation of places. That is not now the case”. The other school policies mentioned for multiples were to place twins in separate classes.
4.3 Appeal process
Of the 48 respondents who were not happy with the school choices offered, just over a third (35.4%) appealed against the decision. The most common grounds for appeal were:

- Need for school with two reception classes to separate twins (5 responses)
- Health (4 responses)
- Distance (3 responses)
- Twins allocated separate schools (2 responses)
- Continuity of education (twins currently at infant/nursery of preferred school) (2 responses)
- Social need (1 response)
- Other – ‘unreasonable decision’ (2 responses).

62.5% of respondents who appealed got help on the appeals process. The most common source of advice was TAMBA (5 responses), followed by nursery staff/teachers (2 responses), local councillor/MP (1 response), online (1 response), local authority booklet (1 response), other parents (1 response) and an educational psychologist (1 response).

The results of parents’ appeals are shown below:

Very few respondents (5.9%) rated the information received from their local authority during the application and appeals process as good or excellent. 47.1% said the advice was satisfactory, 17.6% thought it was poor, and 29.4% said it was ‘very poor’. For example, one parent commented, “The local authority and appeals system are totally unsympathetic and unhelpful”.

4.4 Changing schools
Moving home often involves a change in schools for children. Parents commented that it was not easy (and in some cases impossible) to find two or more places in a new school. This issue is compounded if the multiples have other sibling(s), who also require places at the same school.

“We moved house just before the boys started Year 2 and moved into a new school catchment area which was under a different education authority. The local school was full and despite an appeal, we could not get the boys into that school due to the infant size regulations (made much more difficult due to our need for TWO places). So instead we ‘commuted’ them to their old school half an hour’s drive away in rush hour (the local school being a 5 minute walk away!). This went on until we appealed again for Year 3 places and the appeal was upheld. Just wanted to highlight that it is not just at starting school – age 4 – when parents of multiples can experience difficulties but also due to a house move at any point during the many years at school”.

“I think it is essential that councils ensure they have a school policy that incorporates multiples and siblings. I went through hell when I relocated and tried to organize a school for my twins and daughter who is one year older. The appeal process was horrific. I had so much supporting evidence and yet was told they couldn’t exceed the 30 children rule”.
The stress of finding extra school places can also prevent parents from moving home.

“The biggest issue is changing schools. We hope to move but cannot do so as we would have to wait for two separate places at a new school. This would mean choosing one child to go to the new school when a place comes up and leaving the other child at another school until another place came up. This could take up to a year. I believe this would be dreadful for one child to be left behind whilst the other makes friends in her year and becomes part of the school. Because of this we now cannot move closer to my husband’s work to obtain a better family life and standard of living”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National admissions codes need to ensure multiples are given the same chance as other children of getting their most appropriate school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Codes need to ensure that multiples are not separated across different schools, against their will, and this would be best achieved by making multiples an exception to the oversubscription criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• National codes are the best vehicle for change as they ensure consistency across all types of school and to enable improved inter-LEA transfers/admissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Codes also need to ensure that families who relocate during a school year are given the appropriate opportunity to place their children in a suitable school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All local authorities should publish how they deal with applications for multiple birth siblings and should consider if they wish to amend their own codes to address their unique needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The use of lottery systems in determining the placement of multiples should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All school application forms should have a question on whether the child is a multiple. There should also be space on the form to request a school with ‘dual intake’ primary school classes if parents and teachers think this is necessary for social and educational reasons (if parents do not get a place at a school with two reception classes and they have reason to think this is necessary, it should also be a valid reason for appeal).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The appeals process needs to take into account multiple birth families’ needs.</td>
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5. Prematurity and deferred entry to primary schools

5.1 Prematurity

The average age for survey respondents’ children to start school is almost exactly four and a half years old (4 years, 5.93 months). However, just under a half of parents (42.4%) considered their multiples to be premature. Of these respondents, 21.4% said their children’s birthday put them into the wrong school year (i.e. though due after 1 September, they were born a few weeks/months before). In the first year of school, the gap in ability and maturity between the youngest and oldest in the year is large enough, without the added issue of premature babies ending up in the wrong year. Indeed, recent research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Institute of Education (2007) concluded that summer-born babies, even when not premature, are significantly less likely to be academically successful than their older classmates – a disparity that continues until the age of 18.

There are two separate issues here; the effects of prematurity, which could cause difficulties for children born at any time in the year; and the effect of trying to keep up with children a year older, which is the case for children whose prematurity puts them into the wrong school year. The quoted study looked at the first issue. When, in addition, children are in the wrong year group the burden will be even larger. In addition, when a child is a multiple, there are yet more, well-documented risk-factors which may affect their learning.

“My due date was 9 September, so because they were twins and born at 37 weeks (14 August) they had to go to school a year earlier than they should have, which has made it a lot harder for them as their writing ability is below the expected standard for their age. They are really struggling at school because of this and get very frustrated when, for example, their homework is beyond their capability … The school has said it has no resources to give them any extra help. This has also had an impact on their behaviour at school and then the school complains to us about their behaviour, when really it is a result of not being able to do the work, which then results in them not wanting to follow instructions as they are not confident. One of my twins had nightmares which started when he started school and carried on for several months. I had to get them ready every morning and they didn’t want to go which was a nightmare. They are about to go into year two and still cannot write as well as they need to be able to, so I am about to spend the summer holidays trying to help them myself. I feel very frustrated about this as I feel it is purely as a result of the fact that as one of their teachers admitted “they shouldn’t be here” and they are in the wrong year. It’s not fair that their education should suffer as a result of them being twins and born early.”

5.2 Deferred and delayed entry

Although a significant minority of parents thought their children were too young when they started school, only 3.2% of parents of premature children deferred their entry to primary school to later in the same school year. Only two respondents (0.7%) delayed their children’s entry to the following school year.

The survey did not look explicitly at the reasons why so few respondents deferred or delayed primary school entry, but some of the parents’ comments revealed that they were unaware they could defer or delay entry. Others said that the school/local authority discouraged them and they were worried that deferring or delaying entry would have meant losing their place. The most commonly cited reason for not deferring was a fear that their children would find it more difficult to make friends (an already tricky issue for multiples as Section 7.2 will show).

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9 Crawford, C. et al (2007) concluded that cognitive outcomes are affected by date of birth: a child born in September will, on average, perform significantly better in academic tests than a child born in August, simply because they start school (and sit the tests) up to a year later. Further, this gap remains significant at ages 16 and 18. For example, the study found that 60.7% of September-born girls and 50.3% of September-born boys achieved five GCSEs grade A* to C, compared to 55.2% of August-born girls and 44.2% of August born boys. It also found evidence that teachers were mistaking poor performance as a result of age for special educational needs.

10 The effects of prematurity on cognitive development are well documented (Botting et al, 1998) and found to outweigh socio-economic status (Wolke and Meyer, 1999; Taylor et al, 1998) and inherited traits (Koeppen-Schomems et al, 2000).

11 Two respondents deferred for one term, another two deferred for two terms.
“I do think they are quite immature and are struggling. In hindsight I would prefer them to go to school a year later, but at the time of making that decision I would have lost their place”.

“Would have liked to have deferred their places until they had to legally go to school (i.e. January), but this wasn’t allowed by our local authority”.

Half of those families who deferred entry thought the decision had been effective as they were more confident and emotionally mature, with the rest saying they were not sure. Only one person said delayed entry had not been effective because “they have missed out on the start that the others who started at the beginning of the year have received, but certainly my son would have been too immature before.”

Both respondents, who delayed their twins’ entry by a school year, said the decision had been effective. However, some local authorities are not happy about delaying school entry. Some have even been known to refuse a child delaying entry to primary school without even consulting with parents or medical experts. Indeed, those parents who had succeeded in delaying entry had to make a convincing case that their children’s prematurity needed to be taken into account: “Because of their prematurity they should have started school in 2007 but we argued that their development and prematurity warranted them to be held back a year. After an Educational Psychologist report, they agreed.” Professor Pat Preedy, a leading researcher on multiples and education, has noted that “if it is decided that delaying school entry is appropriate, then it may be necessary to reach agreement with the Local Education Authority about whether the child will remain in that cohort throughout their education. It would potentially be very difficult for the children if they were subsequently required to transfer to secondary school with their birth cohort. Arrangements may also need to be made as to which year the children would take their Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) and external examinations”.

5.3 Impact of prematurity on multiples’ educational, social and emotional development

Over a quarter (28.2%) of parents of premature children thought they were too young when they started school. Parents raised several issues related to prematurity and starting school early: speech problems; tiredness; learning and behaviour difficulties; toilet accidents; difficulties getting themselves changed for P.E.; academically behind their peers; and emotionally and socially immature. Of those born in the wrong school year, 64% thought they were too young when they started school. Several parents commented that their children were emotionally immature and struggling to keep up with their peers.

“Although my children were ready academically, one of them was not ready emotionally, and was not well behaved in the reception class, as he hated sitting with 29 other children for carpet time. Before the boys started school, I found this child very well behaved most of the time, but this was not found to be the case at school – it was as if we were talking about two different children. I think if my child had started school later, he would have been more ready for the long days there.”

12 Bliss’s response to the ‘Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum Consultation’ (24 July 2009) notes that “although it is up to the school and the admission authority to make the final decision on a special case, LAs should not be making claims that it is illegal to admit a child outside their chronological age group … confusing and incorrect advice [is] being conveyed to parents [by Las]”. Bliss and TAMBA believe that there should be flexibility for summer-born pre-term children to delay primary school entry.

13 Research by Prof. Pat Preedy (2001: 22)
Parents of multiples who were born prematurely were more likely to raise concerns about their children’s social and emotional development at pre-school and at primary school.\textsuperscript{14} Parents were also more worried about the educational progress of premature multiples at primary school (although not at pre-school): “Because they were very young when they started school I always felt it was too much for them at that age”.

Of those multiples whose prematurity put them in the wrong school year, parents were almost twice as likely to be worried about their children being educationally behind their peers and socially and emotionally immature. In the early years stage (pre-school and Reception classes), parents observed that their premature multiples were more likely to have speech and communication problems, which impacted on their behaviour and ability to make friends.

“Their self-confidence has at times been low, struggling with literacy, because of prematurity and being a year ahead of where they should be”.

“Their speech has been assessed from reception and the school have given excellent speech therapy support within school, so they have now been discharged ... They struggle educationally, with writing and reading, but not intellectually. We chose not to defer them as they would have lost their friendship group and are now beginning to catch up”.

The latest research from the EPICure studies, which looked at the long-term outcomes of babies born at 25 weeks’ gestation or less, support the findings of our survey and suggest these problems continue for many years. In one study researchers found that, at the age of 11, more than two-thirds had academic or behavioural problems requiring extra support in school compared to 24 per cent of all schoolchildren (Johnson et al, 2009). Professor Neil Marlow, who led the study, noted that premature-born children are likely to face increased academic difficulties when they move into secondary school as they contend with more demanding studies. He recommended that one option to potentially solve this problem is for premature-born children to defer entry to primary school.

Often teachers are not aware that twins are premature and it is helpful for parents to raise the issue with the school. Unfortunately, several parents observed that not all teachers have a good understanding of the effects of prematurity on educational progress, or how it impacts on social and emotional development, and were therefore not well equipped to support their multiples’ development at school. Ideally, premature twins can benefit from a gradual introduction with half days to start with, allowing them to make friends but not become overwhelmed by the long school day.

\textsuperscript{14} It was not possible to compare concerns at secondary school level, due to the small number of survey respondents.
Prematurity is also an important consideration when it comes to deciding whether to place twins in separate classrooms in the first year of school, and parents of premature multiples were less likely to separate their twins (28.5% compared with 34.2% for children born ‘full term’). Premature children in the wrong school year were even less likely to separate their multiples (26%).

Policy recommendations

- Parents of premature children should be able to defer or delay their entry to school if they think it would be appropriate – there must be clarity in the regulations/law. Not all local authorities allow this as a matter of course. [A delayed entry must continue for the rest of the children’s schooling up to Year 13: they cannot be expected to jump a year later on].
- All educators should be trained to be aware of the impact of prematurity on multiples’ educational progress and social/emotional development at school.
- The Government should conduct a national awareness campaign which highlights the potential benefits of deferring or delaying entry to school.
6. Separation at primary school level

6.1 Different schools
A small minority (1%) of parents sent their multiples to different primary schools. Of these, only two parents chose separate schools and both sets of multiples were boy-girl twins. Logistically it is very difficult to have children at different primary schools, although one person managed to drop off their son en route to his sisters’ school. Two schools become easier as the children get older and can walk to school themselves. However, in the first few years of primary schools is it “nigh on impossible” as one person noted: “How can you be in two places at once? In most families at least one parent works so therefore can’t be at the school gates at 9am or 3pm let alone one parent at one school and the other at the other school.” The only benefit of separate schools that parents noticed was increased independence.

6.2 Separate classes at primary school
Schools in the UK have a wide variety of practice regarding separation of multiples at primary school, which is reflected in the results of this Tamba survey. Almost a third (31.6%) of multiples were in separate classes for the first year of school – this figure is lower if multiples are identical and/or premature, 22.4% of parents chose to put their multiples in separate classes and a further 9.2% were separated as a result of school policy.

Where there is more than one class in a year-group, most schools (80.5%) gave parents the choice as to whether to keep them together or apart in the first year of school. However, this leaves almost 20% of schools with two or more classes where parents were not allowed a preference: 4.3% of parents said the school insisted on keeping their multiples together and 15.2% insisted on separating them for the first year. Participating in decision-making about their children’s education (together vs. apart) is very important to parents and being deprived of the choice is a troubling issue for parents of multiples: “very concerned at primary school’s blanket policy to separate all multiples without parental/child consultation”.

“What I feel is appalling in some schools is the fact that THEY decide that twins will be separated and it should be with the permission of the parents – not the decision of the school. The school should support the wishes of parents unless the children are completely disruptive”.

It should be noted here that several survey respondents commented that they had successfully challenged the school policy of separating multiples: “We had to fight to keep them together for reception year”. There has been little research on the effects of classroom separation on multiples, but the largest and most recent study conducted in the UK suggests that separation at age 5 is not ideal, although this depends on the type of sibling relationship (see box below).

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15 23.1% of identical twins were in separate classes for the first school year vs. 31.6% of non-identical twins. Interestingly, the majority of this discrepancy comes from pressure from schools to separate non-identical twins. Schools insisted on separating 1.4% of identical twins, compared to 8.8% of non-identical twins. Parents chose to separate 21.7% of identical twins vs. 22.8% of non-identical twins.
In 2004, the TEDS-environment study (a national study of 2,232 twin children) assessed twins at the start of school (age 5) and followed them up two years later (age 7). Researchers from Kings College, University of London, examined three groups of same-sex twins:

(1) pairs who were in the same class at both ages;
(2) pairs who were in separate classes at both ages; and
(3) pairs who were in the same class at age 5, but separated by age 7.

The findings showed that identical twins had more problems as a result of separation than non-identical twins, including internalising problems such as loneliness, worrying, crying and nervousness. These problems were still there at age 7. The researchers also found that separated twins had more reading problems than those not separated (especially identical twins separated at age 5). See: Tully et al. (2004).

The TEDS-environment set of twins are now at secondary school. As part of this TAMBA study, we asked the researchers at Kings College to re-visit their findings by looking at their twins at age 10 and age 12 to ask:

(1) Are the emotional problems, caused by early separation, temporary?
(2) Do twins have more emotional problems if they are separated in secondary school compared to twins in the same classroom?

The results were surprising and run counter to the widespread opinion amongst many teachers that multiples do better in separate classrooms. When twins are separated at the beginning of primary school, the separated twins showed more emotional problems on average (symptoms of shyness, withdrawal, depression, anxiety) than non separated twins. This finding was highly consistent whether the twins were assessed at age 7 years, 10 years, or 12 years. Although the finding applied to both identical and non-identical twins, the effect of separation on emotional health was strongest among identical twins. The effect of separation at the beginning of primary school was still detectable seven years later at age 12. It should be noted that not all twins were affected by separation and this is an ‘average effect’.

Twins separated at the beginning of secondary school (age 12) also showed more emotional problems than non separated twins. This finding about secondary school separation applied to identical twins, but not to non-identical twins. Both differences (at primary and secondary school) were modest, and thus it was not always statistically significant, but it was highly consistent whether the twins’ emotional problems were rated by the parent, teacher, or the child.

[The recent findings from the TEDS-environment follow-up study are shown in Appendix 1. With thanks to the team at Kings College London: Antony P. Ambler, Louise Arseneault, Avshalom Caspi, and Terrie E. Moffitt.]

Tamba will continue to support parents here by writing letters to head teachers advising against adopting a blanket policy of separating multiple birth children but instead treating them on a case by case basis.

“My daughters will start school in September. I had two meetings when I asked the school not to separate them. Psychologists were involved as well. The school insists to separate them, referring to their ‘School Policy’. At the moment I was promised a lot of help and visits to the school with my daughters, but I am still waiting for the school to contact me, as they promised”.

6.2.1 Preparation for separation

Just over a half (55.4%) of parents prepared their multiples for separation in the first year of primary school. Parents said they talked with their children about the positive aspects of being in different classrooms, discussed the other children they knew who would be in their class, and explained what happens on a typical school day and when there would be opportunities to see each other (lunchtime,
Some parents said they presented it as something that happened when you go to ‘big school’ and it would enable them to make different friends and have something to discuss when they got home. For example, one mother said, “I talked to my children about separate classes well before it happened, right through summer in the lead up to starting school. I encouraged them to think about the fun element of being apart and being able to talk to each other about what they did each day”.

### PreparingMultiples for Separate Classrooms

- Parents talked to their children (35 responses)
- Separate activities/outings with parents (25 responses)
- Different sessions at pre-school (17 responses)
- Separate groups or activities at pre-school (10 responses)
- Separate visits to school and meeting the teacher (9 responses)
- Discussing with teachers the importance of allowing separated multiples to ‘check in’ with their sibling during the school day (7 responses)
- Different leisure activities or classes (7 responses)
- Time apart with grandparents (6 responses)
- Sleepover on own with relatives (3 responses)
- Organised for them to be in a class with one other child they knew (2 responses)

Parents can also help prepare their children by arranging separate activities. Of those families where multiples were separated in the first year of primary school, just under a half (46.5%) had previous experience of being apart prior to starting school. Parents started gradually with the occasional shopping trip or visit to the park building up to (if logistics allowed) regular outings apart or separate playdates with other children. For example, one mother described how each Saturday before the start of school she would spend the day with one twin, while her partner did a different outing with the other twin.

> “At weekends, if one parent went to shops etc, one twin went and the other stayed at home to help with a job, then the next time they would swap”.

Other ideas for getting multiples used to separation in primary school include: different classes or activities (most common for boy-girl twins with ballet and football classes); time apart with grandparents; and sleepovers at relatives on their own.

Pre-school is an ideal setting to get multiples used to the idea of being apart. Parents arranged different sessions, often just once a week or even a few times before starting school. In some cases, parents ‘rotated’ a session so that one child went to that particular session one week, and the next week the other child went (not an easy or cheap option). Another useful strategy is to ask pre-school staff to ensure multiples regularly do separate group activities and encourage them to play with different children.

> “I voluntarily put them in one session each a week on own at pre-school. Was logistically hectic but introduced idea of separation to them”.

> “One day per week, twins were in nursery/preschool one in the morning, the other in the afternoon, while the other was with me for an activity or at home. An expensive luxury as I was then paying for a half-day of childcare for both of them that I couldn’t use for work, but I think it was worth it”.

Before starting school, it is helpful preparation for children to make separate visits to the classroom and meet their new teacher. If possible, parents should speak to their multiples’ teachers about the possibility of allowing them to ‘check in’ with each other during the school day, especially if they are feeling anxious. Just knowing they will still be able to see their sibling is often enough to reassure multiples about the separation.
“I agreed in advance with the teachers that they could go between the classes and visit each other and that they would be flexible in allowing them to do this. One was brave enough to do this and the other was too scared to even ask!”

“Discussed in detail the school day and when they would see each other at playtime, lunch etc. Teachers allowed them to visit the other child or have a peep through window if necessary.”

6.3 Multiples in the same class
The majority of multiples stay together for the first year of primary school, largely because there is only one form entry so no option to separate the children (38.2%). A quarter of parents (26.1%) chose to keep their children together despite the option for dual entry and in 2.6% of cases the school insisted on keeping multiples together, mainly because classes are arranged in alphabetical or birth order.

Of those multiples who were in the same class in the first year of primary school, 67.8% stayed together in the following year (and up to the point of completing the survey). Of those who placed their twins in different classes, the separation typically occurred either in Year 1 (aged 5-6 years) or Year 3 (aged 7-8 years). In several cases, separation was tried several times until successful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No of survey responses</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Either school policy or parents realizing that multiples would benefit from being separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Usually coinciding with move to a larger junior school with two classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>9-10 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>10-11 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In preparation for separation at secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>11-12 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Start of secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>14-15 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Different GCSE options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When multiples are in the same classroom, there are a number of ways that teachers and parents can help twins and triplets feel like individuals. The most common strategy is to place multiples on different tables or in different groups within the same classroom. Several parents observed that when their multiples were moved to different tables, they were less likely to distract each other, copy work, and their self-esteem and confidence often increased. Placing multiples on different tables is not necessarily advantageous when children are grouped according to ability, however, as one child can end up in a group that does not suit their educational level.

“Seated at different tables. This was OK in reception, but when streaming was evident I felt they disadvantaged one twin just to make sure she was on a different table when their abilities were very similar”.

“Separated into different groups to work in, but this has caused many problems because of being the same academic ability and the teacher not wanting to separate them”.
Special arrangements within the class or at home (for multiples in the same classroom)

- Different groups/tables (74 responses)
- Different reading books (41 responses)
- Homework and reading on a one-to-one basis in separate rooms or done sequentially (16 responses)
- Different activities (7 responses)
- Looking different (badges on uniforms; colours of school shirts etc) (5 responses)
- Encouraged to play separately at playtime (4 responses)
- Different sports groups or ‘houses’ (4 responses)
- Separate appointments at parents’ evenings (4 responses)
- Never referred to as ‘the twins’ or ‘the triplets’ (4 responses)
- Own copies of letters homes (3 responses)
- Different groups on school trips (3 responses)
- Different school projects or homework (2 responses)
- Coat pegs away from each other (2 responses)
- None (26 responses)

Parents often receive different reading books, which has the added benefit that multiples like to read each others’ books and so can advance more quickly with double the reading material.

“The school have started one off at the top of each set of books and the other at the bottom and we read to the middle of each set only as often both insist on reading each others’ book. This has been fantastic. As a parent who goes into help with reading, it can be bad enough hearing the same book two or three times at school. To get it twice more at home drives you mad!”

Parents emphasized the importance of listening to their multiples read at different times and in separate rooms, as children tend to listen to each other and recite the story from memory when it gets to their turn. Homework is also managed at different times/locations and ideally with a different adult or older child: “when they work at the same table and at the same time it gets too confusing”. Nevertheless, this is often easier said, than done!

“Homework is often a nightmare and we do it at the weekend in separate rooms. But bonus is husband feels so much more involved than other fathers which he is very happy with.”

“I do make attempts to listen to girls’ reading individually and try and give them both separate attention. It is difficult as pretty much have same work on same nights, and husband works away. School suggested letting one twin watch TV whilst other does homework and vice versa! But in my experience this doesn’t work as they want to do whatever the other is doing”.

Other strategies include: different activities, including sports groups or houses; encouraging multiples to play with other children at playtime; separate appointments at parents’ evening; not referring to multiples as ‘the twins’ or ‘the triplets’; dressing multiples differently; asking for two (or three) sets of letters home, notes and forms; different school projects or homework; different groups on school trips; and coat pegs away from each other.

6.3.1 Benefits of being in the same classroom

Parents believed that their multiples benefitted from staying together for several reasons, but primarily because the children needed the reassurance of being together. Even if the multiples played separately, the ability to look out and support one another during the school day was highly valued by parents and children. This emotional support during the early years of primary school is important for multiples’ confidence, security and happiness.

“It gave them confidence and reassurance when they started school, especially as there was a lot of disruption at home, e.g. bereavement and half-sister moving away”
Benefits of Multiples in the Same Class at Primary School

- Reassurance – look out and support one another (43 responses)
- Easier to settle in (29 responses)
- Gives them confidence (28 responses)
- Shared experiences – can discuss what happened at school (17 responses)
- Benefits for shier or less confident child(ren) (16 responses)
- Enjoy being together (15 responses)
- Security – less bullied and felt safer (14 responses)
- Logistical advantages for parents, such as same homework, school trips and parties (12 responses)
- Same friends (9 responses)
- Educational advantages – can help each other (3 responses)
- Tell tales so good for parents to find out if one has been misbehaving (3 responses)
- Able to check on each other during the day (3 responses)
- Helpful for communication problems (3 responses)
- Important for when change at home, such as bereavement, moving house (2 responses)

Parents thought it was easier for multiples to settle in if they are together for the first year of primary school: “a friendly face in a sea of unknown faces”. Several examples were given of multiples supporting each other through the emotional difficulties of starting school (tiredness, being away from parents, making new friends). Being together for the first year is particularly helpful for shy twins who have not had previous experience of making new friends or being in an unfamiliar environment without their sibling. Several parents described how their less confident twin benefited from having their sibling close by and was therefore much happier at school. Likewise, when both/all multiples are reserved, being together can help them settle in.

“They had a familiar face which made the first weeks easier. They sat together, played together and even went to the toilet together during the first half term so they didn’t have the anxiety that most of the other children had.”

“They were very young on starting school (4 yrs, 7 days) and had never been separated, so need the ‘emotional security’ of each other.”

Being in the same classroom helps build multiples’ confidence and several parents said that having their sibling close by gave them the self-assurance to get involved in different activities and not to cling to each other. Indeed, parents described how siblings who had previously been confident became anxious and clingy if forcibly separated to different classrooms.

“They are confident by having each other close but they get involved in different activities and do not cling to each other. As they have always been together and sleep together, separation in my eyes would be cruel and disadvantage them as the upset and distress caused would hinder their learning, confidence etc”.

Another advantage of having multiples in the same class is the joy of shared experiences and being able to discuss their school-day together at home: “they can talk to us about the learning at school and are able to have a detailed conversation about this between them”. Sharing friends can also be a positive experience (although not always as tension may arise when multiples compete over the same friend), especially if one twin is less confident socially.

“One twin is more shy and he enjoys having his more gregarious twin around. It helps arrange play days with mutual school friends”.

Parents believed that having their multiples in the same classroom created a sense of security and their children were less likely to feel anxious: “a companion for new/scary situations” and “never seem afraid to go”. Another perceived ‘security’ advantage of placing multiples together is they are less likely to be bullied with a sibling there to watch out and protect them.
“It gave them great security in Reception to have each other in the same class. They helped each other at tricky times, such as lunchtime”.

“Especially when they started at school they had each other for security. There is an anti-bullying aspect to there being two of them – although the school is good about bullying”.

There are logistical advantages for parents of having multiples in the same class – same homework, school trips, parties, dealing with one teacher, being able to drop off/collection from the same place. One parent observed that her twins were better at reading because “when it came to reading books they were at the same level and hence received twice as much reading material as a singleton”. Other educational advantages of being in the same classroom include the ability to discuss schoolwork at home and work collaboratively: “I can work with them both on homework and spend longer time doing the same task”.

6.3.2 Problems of staying together
The most common difficulty of having multiples in the same class is unhealthy competition over who is better at schoolwork, sport, art, music, making friends and even “silly things like who got changed for PE first”. Rivalry between multiples, especially non-identical boy-boy twins, can result in arguments, physical fights, teasing, bickering, sarcasm and sulking, both at home and in the classroom.

“Despite many requests to separate them as much as possible, because the school had a policy of ‘ability’ tables and all of my boys were of the same rough ability they were nearly always sat next to each other. The squabbling at home became unbearable. One of the boys’ self confidence was very badly affected by this as he always saw himself as failing, as he was not as good as his brothers … the fact that the three of them were on the highest ability table with just one other child did not occur to him”.

Parents described how constant competition and comparisons between their multiples eroded their child’s confidence and often led to one twin ‘opting out’. Even when both twins are good at a subject, the child who is not coming first may end up feeling inferior and that it is not worth trying to achieve excellent results as they’ll never be as good as their sibling.

“There is a tendency for my sons to compare themselves with one another in academic terms. One took a while to find his feet in school whilst the other developed confidence and aptitude far more quickly. Given the personalities that each have, the son who has found school harder to cope with compares himself unfavourably, and gives up more easily feeling that he cannot compete with his brother”.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of Multiples in the Same Class at Primary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unhealthy competition (53 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers and other children getting them confused or comparing them (45 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficult to make separate friends (28 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No privacy and telling tales on each other (19 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competing over friends (11 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dominant twin bossing the other about or answering for them (10 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fighting (8 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distraction to each other (5 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shier twin holding back more outgoing twin (4 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Too reliant on each other (4 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Copying each other’s homework or remembering their answers (2 responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t get time away from each other (1 response)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Embarrassed by the other’s behavior (1 response)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Prevalence rates of victims, bullies and bully/victims are similar in studies of twins to those of samples of singletons (Personal communication with Louise Arsenault), although no research has yet been conducted to see if bullying reduces if multiples are in the same classroom. Arsenault et al (2006) also report no difference in bullying between identical and non-identical twins: 15% monozygotic vs 14% dizygotic twins were pure victims of bullying, whereas 6% monozygotic vs 7% dizygotic twins were both bully and victims.
Problems of being confused with each other by teachers and their classmates are exacerbated when multiples are in the same classroom. The ‘twin issue’ and establishing one’s individuality is clearly more of a concern for identical twins or multiples that look very similar, but even with children who look nothing like each other teachers “still muddle up their names”. Parents raised several concerns about the problems that arose at primary school when similar-looking multiples are in the same classroom: being called ‘the twins’ rather than their names; frustration when teachers/peers get their names mixed up; swapping identities and personalities; and mix-ups in school reports.

“Peers view them as a unit and then it is hard for them to develop their individuality”.

“Not too sure the teachers are able to separate them academically from each other. We recently received their school reports and we felt that some of the comments would have applied to the other twin and vice versa”.

“At parents evening, the teacher talks about one child and then slipped into conversation the second twin. I very quickly said ‘we are talking about x and not y, will be discussing y next’. Only offered one appointment for two children – contacted school and asked for two appointments. If I had two children at the school in different years would have been given two separate appointments, pointed this out to the school.”

Being in the same class can also make it difficult for multiples to have separate friends, especially if they are the same sex. In some cases, parents thought that twins find it harder to make friends as “two children are more intimidating to approach than one” (although conversely other children may be curious about multiples and this novelty factor can help their popularity). It is also sometimes the case that the enjoyment that multiples get from their own sibling relationship may appear exclusive to others, but parents also identified “an aspect of laziness in making new friends”.

“I find that my triplets have not made any really close friendship bonds within the class because they tend to gravitate towards their brothers before anyone else”.

Although multiples were mostly happy to share the same set of friends, several parents observed that their multiples competed over friends, putting the other one down in front of their friends: “They have to ‘share’ friends because there aren’t many girls in their class and this also leads to arguments … ‘She likes me more than you’.”

Multiples in the same class may experience a lack of privacy, with their siblings ‘telling tales’ on each other: “if one’s been in trouble in class, the other can’t wait to tell me!” Another mother observed that her twins “always know how the other is doing and seem to enjoy telling tales: ‘She got told off today for scruffy writing’ etc!”

Parents also expressed concerns about sibling relationships where the dynamics were skewed, with one child being more confident and outgoing. In some cases, the more dominant twin bosses, answers or talks over the less confident one. There are also problems when one child settles in before the other and feels that they are being held back by the shier, less confident twin. For example, one mother described how “L did used to bother M when they first started school. She was unsettled at first and used to go to him for reassurance. I don’t think he appreciated this.”

When the relationship between multiples limits the children’s ability to develop their own identity, this can occasionally result in tension, fighting, and squabbling as the multiples struggle against each other: “He has targeted his sister when upset or frustrated”. It is important for teachers to attempt to understand how the dynamics of twin/triplet relationships may affect children’s behaviour and to work closely with parents to develop strategies to cope with this in the classroom and at home.
“I have been concerned that their teachers have been unable or unwilling to see the complexity of their relationship and how their behaviour affects one another. One twin is preferred by teachers and peers and she augments this by antagonizing the other twin so that she behaves badly and gets into trouble.”

“Teachers unwilling to try and understand twin psychology … they [the twins] also find it hard at times to understand that school is different to home! They argue at home and carry on in the classroom!”

In contrast, a very closely bonded relationship may also cause problems of multiples being too reliant on each other. Parents commented that having multiples in the same classroom can sometimes be a distraction to each other: “too busy seeing what their twin is doing”. Behaviour can also deteriorate if multiples encourage each other into negative actions: “they have an ally when behaving badly”.

Although parents said that having multiples in the same classroom is an advantage when it comes to helping their children with the same homework, it can also create problems with multiples copying each others’ homework (either on purpose or accidentally). Parents realised it was better to help their multiples with their homework separately, but found this to be repetitive and not always practical given the demands of domestic life.

Policy recommendations

- Educators need to be trained to understand that decisions on whether to separate multiples or keep them in the same classroom should be taken on a case-by-case basis.
- If in doubt, parents and educators should consider keeping children together and regularly review the impact of their decision on the siblings.
- When starting school, educators must arrange the children’s placement in consultation with parents. This should be enforced via legislation – after years of trying to address the situation it appears that little progress has been made.
- Until legislation has been enacted, all schools that have a policy on the separation of twins must publish it as a matter of urgency.
- Educators and parents should regularly discuss and review homework arrangements to ensure that individual learning needs are met without setting unreasonable demands on children or parents.
- Whilst precautions should be taken to avoid copying, educators and parents need to be aware that abilities and written work may be similar and is not necessarily as a result of one multiple reproducing the work of another.
7. Parents’ concerns about multiples at primary school

7.1 Educational concerns
A third of parents (32.8%) have concerns with regard to the educational progress of their multiples during primary school. The most frequently expressed worry is that both/all multiples are behind their peers academically, particularly with literacy (reading and writing) and dyslexia. Several parents raised an important issue about schools being slow to diagnose twins with dyslexia or special needs, when they have no speech difficulties.

“One twin struggled with reading and writing, but it was not felt an issue because she was orally very bright and had lots of confidence. Her sister did not struggle in this issue. It took quite a long time for the school to acknowledge that she was dyslexic. Her confidence and self-esteem suffered enormously because she had slipped below her peers and sister in her academic work”.

“One twin has also struggled with handwriting and it looks like she copied her sister and became right-handed when she has a left-hand dominance”.

Parents’ Concerns about Multiples’ Educational Progress at Primary School

- Behind their peers academically (19 responses)
- One child’s confidence suffering due to the other progressing faster (15 responses)
- Dyslexia and other learning difficulties (9 responses)
- Not getting support with special needs (8 responses)
- Teachers not aware of unique twin relationship and comparing (7 responses)
- Not enough time after school to read/do homework on one-to-one basis (5 responses)
- Lack of concentration (5 responses)
- Brighter child not being stretched sufficiently (5 responses)
- Behavioural problems (4 responses)
- Kept together on ability tables although different abilities (2 responses)
- Prematurity affecting academic progress (2 responses)
- Immature speech (2 responses)
- Teachers not focusing on individual achievements, but comparing with each other (2 responses)
- Poor continuity across the year group causes problems when multiples in separate classes (2 responses)

Another frequently expressed concern is that one child is learning quicker than the other(s), leading to confidence issues and the slower child ‘opting out’ (as discussed in Section 6.3.2). At the same time, parents worried that teachers did not notice differences between twins and the brighter child was not being stretched sufficiently. When multiples have different educational abilities, but are kept together for behaviour reasons or as a source of comfort to each other, a problem can arise of their educational needs not being targeted and sufficiently addressed.

“They were kept together as Twin 1 was a ‘calming’ influence on his brother. So they kept them together when their abilities are not alike to help him.”

“I was concerned that the progress one of my sons was making was not being recognized and he was kept in the same reading group as his brother even though there was a significant difference in their ability”.

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17 The research on educational achievement of multiples is mixed. Although evidence from the UK suggests that twins typically have lower levels of academic performance and recorded IQs than singletons (e.g. Ronalds et al, 2005), recent research from outside the UK indicates that the ‘cognitive disadvantage of twins’ can be minimised (Christensen and McGue, 2008: 337).

18 Comparative studies reveal higher rates of language delays amongst twins than singletons, particularly in articulation and syntax (Thorpe, 2006). Delays are more widespread for male twins and are mainly caused by ‘poorer quality of language environment’ in multiple families.
Parents also commented that concentration difficulties and behavioural problems\(^\text{19}\) had affected their multiples’ educational progress. Several parents noted delays and struggles to get one (or all) multiples statemented: “it took too long to get a Statement for Twin 2 because his special needs did not include speech problems etc and are primarily behavioural”.

“The difficulty getting a Statement of Special Educational Needs for kids with special needs that affects their behaviour but have a good IQ and no speech difficulties, etc, such as those with AS and ADHD is appalling. This has hampered both his own educational progress and that of his twin, whose individual needs assistant has to work with both twins”.

Educational progress may also suffer slightly when parents find it difficult to help their multiples practice their reading and do their homework on a one-to-one basis, particularly if they have triplets, other siblings or are a single parent. Teachers were not always sympathetic to this dilemma for parents of multiples.

“We have been group reading this year but have been told by the school this should not continue. As my husband works long hours, one-to-one reading is going to prove tricky. The school thinks the children will readily accept the idea of taking turns and having their own time with me. I’m not sure they understand that they have never had one-to-one and have been fighting for my attention all their lives so it is not going to be as straightforward as they think”.

7.2 Social and emotional development

38.9 per cent of survey respondents expressed concerns about the social and emotional development of their multiples during primary school. Parents were most concerned about their multiples’ ability to make friends, commenting that they seem to be invited to fewer parties or around to play at friends’ houses. Other parents are reluctant to invite one twin without the other, meaning “they are not often invited out to friends because there are two of them”. A related issue is fighting between multiples over friends, particularly if one twin is more outgoing and does not want to share their friends or look after their ‘shadow’ sibling.

“It has been harder for them interacting with others and developing friendships is always an issue. Identical twins do cause attention. This may be welcomed at first but soon becomes unwanted. It may even be a reason to pick on them, because they are different. They find it tiresome when people call them by the wrong name or say ‘Which one are you?’ So they may appear grumpy at times. Peers can view them as a unit so it is hard for them to develop as individuals”.

Parents’ Concerns about Multiples’ Social and Emotional Development at Primary School

- Difficulties making friends (18 responses)
- Anxiety about separation (18 responses)
- Problems sharing friends (14 responses)
- Emotionally (and physically) immature compared to peers (13 responses)
- Constant battle to be an individual (10 responses)
- Lack of confidence (9 responses)
- One twin over-shadowing the other (7 responses)
- Teased for being twins (2 responses)
- One twin bullying the other (2 responses)

\(^\text{19}\) Research from Australia suggests higher rates of ADHD in twins than singletons (e.g. Hay, 2005; Levy et al., 1996). Hay and Preedy (2006: 399) note that: “While ADHD itself has a major genetic component, it is easy to see how any increased problems with attention and impulsivity in twins could be due largely to their unique family situation, never being able to concentrate on one thing because of the constant interference from the other twin and having to get in quickly, if the adult is going to attend to them rather than their co-twin”.
Another frequently mentioned concern is how separation affects the social and emotional development of multiples, in particular their happiness, self-confidence and enjoyment of school. Parents commented that being apart from their sibling was often quite difficult for children to cope with, although some handled the separation better than others. While some multiples thrived apart from each other, some became anxious, clingy and tearful. It is important for parents and teachers to assess multiples on a case-by-case basis to see whether being in different classrooms will be beneficial for the children.

“I feel we should have been consulted on their separation, although have to accept the school has prior experience of splitting twins. Our girls share the same friends and the less socially confident child is now more anxious than she used to be about finding her sister, or a friend, at playtime. They still seek each other out wherever possible, i.e. at lunchtimes. Otherwise, they have coped OK, but it is sad to think they cannot be together in class. All the other school children will be thoughtfully placed with friends next year in new classes, but my girls (who are good friends, but not exclusive friends) will automatically be separated. Both have told me they want to be in the same class. I think it would have helped this Reception year – in their case, not necessarily for other twins – to have started together, built their confidence and perhaps separated next year or so for them to develop individually”.

Multiples are more likely to be premature, as discussed in Section 5, and parents raised concerns about their children being emotionally and physically immature compared to their peers. One mother said: “I feel they will always be struggling to catch up as they are in the wrong year.” Several parents said their children were young emotionally and found it difficult to play with children of their own age, although they were happy to talk to adults or older children. Problems with being physically smaller were also a source of concern for parents of (boy) twins.

“H isn’t as ‘grown up’ as P, he still seems to need more support. The boys were early and are not as tall as most of the others in their class. H is slightly claustrophobic and has slightly reduced hearing … they send him into a crush at home time to get his coat and this causes him to panic as he gets pushed into the door or into the coat pegs. He then tries to push them away or, worse still, panics and gets upset.”

“They get teased because they are smaller than the other children in their year and as a result, one of them is extremely sensitive.”

While several survey respondents commented that their children’s teachers had been very supportive about the ‘twinship’ and their multiples had not been confused or compared, concerns about individuality are widespread for parents of school-aged multiples. Similar or identical-looking multiples can face “a constant battle to be an individual” and may experience frustration when their friends and teachers can’t tell them apart. In two extreme cases, parents were anxious about their multiples, who were teased for being twins.

Other comments about social and emotional problems relate to one twin overshadowing the other or one twin bullying the other: “One of my boys is really shy and quiet, the other not really. When they were in the same class, T was the shadow of L. L often picked on T if he wasn’t doing the right thing”.

A comparison between the concerns of parents of identical and non-identical multiples reveals that the difference found at pre-school level swaps around at primary school. Indeed, parents of non-identical multiples had slightly more worries about their children’s educational progress (33.7% for non-identicals vs. 32.4% for identicals) and social and emotional development (40.7% for non-identicals vs. 36.6% for identical).

Although parents of identical multiples appeared less concerned at primary school level, the types of concerns were different. Parents of identical twins were more concerned about ‘identity issues’, anxiety about separation, clinging to each other and problems making friends. Non-identical multiples had issues of sibling rivalry, learning and behavioural difficulties and problems sharing friends.
A comparison of the survey findings by zygosity (identicals vs. non-identicals) and gender reveals that parents of twin boys are most concerned about their children’s progress at primary school, both their education and their social/emotional development.\textsuperscript{20} As the table below shows, parents of non-identical twin boys had the greatest concerns, typically about unhealthy competition, learning/behavioural problems and speech/language delays.\textsuperscript{21} One mother of non-identical twin boys observed, “They are behind and slower than the other children, and I think that the council should provide more learning support for twins when needed.” Another agreed that schools were not “geared up for multiples”.

“There are Special Needs teachers, but I think multiples have special needs and need much more support than they currently get, which is nothing. When our twins started school we were never invited in to discuss any needs they may have. I feel let down by the system”.

Percentage of parents concerned about primary school by gender and zygosity

As the table below shows, parents’ concerns were magnified in primary schools run by the local authority and the voluntary sector. Parents with children in independent primary schools were less concerned about their educational progress and social/emotional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% parents concerned about educational progress</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% parents concerned about social/emotional development</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy recommendation

• Tamba is currently working with researchers to produce a briefing for:
  o Parents: how to decide whether your multiples are better in the same class or different classes; suggestions on preparing children for separate classes; ideas for separation if multiples are in the same class etc.
  o Teachers: practical tips on having twins in the same class

\textsuperscript{20} It is not possible to analyse whether triplet boys are also an issue for concern, due to the small number of responses.

\textsuperscript{21} Other research has also identified twin boys as facing a double disadvantage at school, due to gender and multiple birth issues. For example, one study found that 33% of 9-13 year old twin boys were at least 18 months behind their chronological age for reading (Johnston, Hay & O’Brien, 1983). In another test, only 42% of twin boys mastered it, compared with 71% of singleton boys (Australian national survey, cited in Preedy, 2001).
8. Secondary school level

Only 6.9% of survey respondents currently have children at secondary school, with a further 2.4% having children who have now left school. 2.1% have applied for Year 7 (entry to secondary school) and were waiting to hear at the time of completing the survey.

8.1 Local authority policy on multiples and secondary school admissions

A small proportion of parents had applied to secondary school – a total of 33 respondents. 15.2% of parents said their local authority had a policy on multiples for primary school, with a further 51.5% not sure or could not remember. A third of respondents (33.3%) said their local authority did not have a policy on school admissions for multiples.

“I am always surprised at how little parents of twins know about the admissions process, even though our LA produces a very good booklet giving all the details. Parents seem to believe that they will get both children into their first choice school, with no problems. When we applied for secondary, the LA did not ask on the form if your child was one of a multiple, and took no account of it. They do now.”

As at primary school, parents commented there was no space on the application form for secondary school to note that their children were multiples. Even worse, in a couple of instances the school admissions system treated twins as ‘one child’ with ‘one place’ offered. When the parents discovered the error, all the other places had been allocated already.

“We only received one application form for our twins for secondary school and even though we got and completed another one, only one place was allocated in our LEA school. The other twins in the year group were only allocated a place for one child as well. When I phoned, I was told they only had one child in the system even though the forms were forwarded through their primary school who had evidence of both being sent. Fortunately, we had places in the church school in the neighbouring authority, but the other set were allocated different schools as there were no more places in the school where the child had been placed”.

The system for secondary schools is currently perceived to be “unfair”, with parents of multiples observing that “education authorities can be utterly heartless and cruel to twins and their parents”. Policies on secondary school admissions varied according to local authorities with some offering a place to the other multiple(s) if the last child allocated is a multiple (Hampshire), not including grammar schools. However, other authorities have a “definite policy on not providing a place for all if one gets one” (Portsmouth). Another respondent described an anomaly in the appeal system in Buckinghamshire County Council:

“School oversubscribed - done on distance basis - if place comes up on waiting list both get places. But, under appeal process, one may get place but not the other. Nightmare and still going through it.”

Only three survey respondents (9.4%) lived in areas where a lottery system was operating for over-subscribed schools at the time of applying for places (Croydon, Bromley and Leeds). In two of these cases, no places were allocated at any of the preferred schools, while in the third case, one child was offered a place, but the other wasn’t. Two of the schools were local authority (Croydon and Leeds), while one was private (Bromley). Parents thought the lottery system was particularly unfair for multiple-birth children: “The stress caused by the school process is appalling, more so to parents with twins. Trying to obtain two school places is a problem even to schools not oversubscribed. The lottery system should be abolished for a much fairer system”. Parents living in areas where a lottery system operates also expressed concern about what would happen to their children.

“We currently live in Brighton & Hove. The particular part of Brighton where we live has a lottery system for two local secondary schools, and I am concerned that we might be in a position of being randomly allocated different schools when we apply for secondary places in a couple of years time.”
8.2 Secondary school offers
Although most survey respondents (80%) were offered their first preference secondary school for all multiples, at least 20% were unhappy with the places allocated by their local authorities. 10% of parents were allocated places in different schools and 6.7% were not offered any places at their preferred schools.

8.3 Appeal process
Of the eight respondents who were not happy with the school choices offered, five (62.5%) appealed against the decision. The grounds for appeal cited were:

“Needs for single sex schooling and equal opportunities for all my children - daughter getting school of choice and sons not. Also many more supporting arguments including the fact that the school did not have it own policy at the time for multiples - this has now changed”

“For the Grammar school - academically the twins have always been very similar and I produced educational documents. Also that it was their wish and ours for them to educated together. Local secondary school - to be educated with friends he has in our village whilst dealing with the separation of his twin. School allocated is 20 miles away, we live in a very rural county. Does not know anyone attending.”

“Locality to School. Previous links to the school. Wrong catchment area allocated to my address”

“Both suited to all girls school (which school offered isn’t) and would not do well in mixed school due to lack of confidence.”

Four out of the five respondents who appealed got help on the appeals process: two from the county council; one from TAMBA; and one used books/online resources. None of the respondents rated the local authority’s appeal advice as good or very good (two thought it was satisfactory; two thought it was ‘poor’ and one said it was ‘very poor’). Two of the respondents won their case on appeal, two lost their appeals and the other respondent is about to go to appeal.

8.4 Different schools
Two respondents (6.1%) sent their children to separate schools. One of these respondents actively chose this decision, whereas the other did not. Both respondents had very little or no previous experience of being apart. The logistical difficulties of being at separate secondary schools are: transport (although not such a problem when they get older and can take the bus), maintaining friendships outside of school, and participation in after school clubs. One parent noted that her multiples were “understandably nervous” about being separated, with a further issue that “the twin who is not going to the Grammar, feels very let down because he did not do well in the 11+ tests but knows he is just as good as his brother academically.”
8.5 Separate classes at secondary school
Most multiples are in separate classrooms at secondary school – a total of 16.7% stayed together (10% due to school policy and 6.7% of parents chose to keep multiples together). This is largely due to classes being streamed according to ability and children choosing different subject options.

8.6 Parents’ concerns about educational progress at secondary school
Although 40 per cent of parents had concerns with regard to the educational progress of their multiples during secondary school, almost all of these concerns were not related to the fact their children were multiples. Instead they were issues like: children not being stretched academically; not interested in their work; and dyslexia not being addressed. Only two parents described multiple-specific concerns:

“The potential gap between a grammar school education and a local authority run school’s education may make the twins feel driven even further apart”.

“Although they were in separate forms, teacher got them mixed up frequently. One was pulled out of the lunch queue and admonished for not doing his homework even though it was his brother who was at fault. Teachers seemed to have an inability to tell them apart when fellow pupils had few problems”.

8.7 Parents’ concerns about social and emotional development at secondary school
29 per cent of parents were concerned about the social and emotional development of their multiples. Concerns at secondary school level were largely about difficulties making and keeping friendships and experiences of being bullied (although not related to being multiples). For some multiples, secondary school is their first experience of being separated and parents were worried about how their children would cope with being apart. One parent described how her twins appeared to go ‘backwards’ when they were placed together at secondary school, despite being previously in different classrooms in primary school and the parents asking for the twins to be separated:

“They were in every lesson together, even had to sit together. As they were together 24/7, their behaviour at home deteriorated rapidly, even their elder sister commented on this … School was contacted and eventually apologized for their error – they had separated the wrong set of twins. They were separated at the beginning of the next term and things improved. Not easy at the time”.
9. Policy recommendations

Play opportunities for babies and toddlers
• Private and social providers of recreational facilities should urgently review how their facilities meet the needs of larger families and especially those consisting of a number of small children but only one carer.
• Private and social providers should consider financial discounts for multiple birth children.
• Local authorities must ensure that their recreational activities meet the needs of all children and families by providing adult supervision to help multiple birth or other families who may not be able to access their facilities without additional practical help (e.g. for swimming, physical activities, soft play).

Preschool
• All families that want their multiples to attend pre-school or other early years settings, but are unable to do so due to cost or because places are not available should receive additional support from the local authority.
• All early years staff who have oversight of multiple birth children should be appropriately trained to meet their individual needs.

School admissions
• National admissions codes need to ensure multiples are given the same chance as other children of getting their most appropriate school.
• Codes need to ensure that multiples are not separated across different schools, against their will, and this would be best achieved by making multiples an exception to the oversubscription criteria.
• National codes are the best vehicle for change as they ensure consistency across all types of school and to enable improved inter-LEA transfers/admissions.
• Codes also need to ensure that families who relocate during a school year are given the appropriate opportunity to place their children in a suitable school.
• All local authorities should publish how they deal with applications for multiple birth siblings and should consider whether they wish to amend their own codes to address their unique needs.
• The use of lottery systems in determining the placement of multiples should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
• All school application forms should have a question on whether the child is a multiple. There should also be space on the form to request a school with ‘dual intake’ primary school classes if parents and teachers think this is necessary for social and educational reasons (if parents do not get a place at a school with two reception classes and they have reason to think this is necessary, it should also be a valid reason for appeal).
• The appeals process needs to take into account multiple birth families’ needs.

Prematurity and deferred/delayed entry to primary schools
• Parents of premature children should be able to defer or delay their entry to school if they think it would be appropriate – there must be clarity in the regulations/law. Not all local authorities allow this as a matter of course. [A delayed entry must continue for the rest of the children’s schooling up to Year 13: they cannot be expected to jump a year later on].
• All educators should be trained to be aware of the impact of prematurity on multiples’ educational progress and social/emotional development at school.
• Governments should conduct national awareness campaigns which highlight the potential benefits of deferring or delaying entry to school.
Separation at primary school level

- Educators need to be trained to understand that decisions on whether to separate multiples or keep them in the same classroom should be taken on a case-by-case basis.
- If in doubt, parents and educators should consider keeping children together and regularly review the impact of their decision on the siblings.
- When starting school, educators must arrange the children's placement in consultation with parents. This should be enforced via legislation – after years of trying to address the situation it appears that little progress has been made.
- Until legislation has been enacted, all schools that have a policy on the separation of twins must publish it as a matter of urgency.
- Educators and parents should regularly discuss and review homework arrangements to ensure that individual learning needs are met without setting unreasonable demands on children or parents.
- Whilst precautions should be taken to avoid copying, educators and parents need to be aware that abilities and written work may be similar and is not necessarily as a result of one multiple reproducing the work of another.
Bibliography


Appendix 1:


This document examines the impact of separating twins when they enter primary and secondary school on children’s emotional problems. Firstly, we examined whether twins who were separated in primary school had more emotional problems compared to twins who were in the same classroom. We examined MZ and DZ twins separately in case classroom separation affected twins differently. We looked at emotional problems when children were 5 years, and then at 7, 10 and 12 years. Emotional problems were reported by mothers, teachers and twins themselves when they were 12 years old. Secondly, we examined whether twins who were separated in secondary school had more emotional problems compared to twins who were in the same classroom.

Sample

Participants were members of the Environmental Risk (E-Risk) Longitudinal Twin Study, which tracks the development of a nationally representative birth cohort of 2,232 British children. The sample was drawn from a larger birth register of twins born in England and Wales in 1994-1995.

Briefly, the E-risk sample was constructed in 1999-2000, when 1,116 families with same-sex 5-year old twins (93% of those eligible) participated in home-visit assessments. Families were recruited to represent the UK population of families with newborns in the 1990’s, based on (a) residential location throughout England and Wales and (b) mother’s age (i.e., older mothers having twins via assisted reproduction were under-selected and teenaged mothers with twins were over-selected). Follow-up home visits were conducted when the children were aged 7 years (98% participation), 10 years (96% participation), and, most recently, 12 years (96% participation). The sample includes 55% monozygotic (MZ) and 45% dizygotic (DZ) twin pairs. Sex is evenly distributed within zygosity (49% male). Parents gave informed consent and children gave assent. Confidentiality was preserved, and the child’s general practitioner was notified only when a mother reported her child was at risk to self or others. The Maudsley Hospital Ethics Committee approved each phase of the study.

Results

Separation in Primary School:

• When twins are separated at the beginning of primary school, the separated twins showed more emotional problems on average (symptoms of shyness, withdrawal, depression, anxiety) than non separated twins. This is an “on average” effect, some twins were strongly affected by separation, other were unaffected.

• This difference was modest, and thus it was not always statistically significant, but it was highly consistent whether we assessed the twins at age 7 years, 10 years, or 12 years, and whether their emotional problems were rated by the parent, teacher, or the child.

• This finding applied to both MZ and DZ twins, but the effect of separation on emotional health was strongest among MZ twins.

• The effect of separation at the beginning of primary school was still detectable seven years later at age 12.

These results can be found in Tables 1 and 2 of this document.
Separation in Secondary School:
- When twins are separated at the beginning of secondary school (age 12), the separated twins showed more emotional problems (symptoms of shyness, withdrawal, depression, anxiety) than non-separated twins.
- This difference was also modest, and thus it was not always statistically significant, but it was highly consistent whether the twins’ emotional problems were rated by the parent, teacher, or the child. This finding about secondary school separation applied to MZ twins, but not to DZ twins.

These results can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of this document.

Table 1. **MZ twins** - Mean and standard Deviation of mothers’, teachers’ and children’s report of emotional problems according to classroom separation status at 5 and 7 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional problems</th>
<th>Not Separated (NS)</th>
<th>Separated (S)</th>
<th>P value$^{22}$</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MZ twins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N     Mean (SD)</td>
<td>N     Mean (SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>600   6.16 (4.99)</td>
<td>156   6.36 (4.96)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 7</td>
<td>599   5.47 (4.53)</td>
<td>156   5.62 (4.92)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 10</td>
<td>584   5.89 (4.79)</td>
<td>152   6.37 (5.58)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 12</td>
<td>582   5.71 (5.10)</td>
<td>146   6.62 (6.62)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>596   4.61 (4.64)</td>
<td>155   7.02 (5.87)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 7</td>
<td>600   4.42 (4.93)</td>
<td>156   5.82 (5.82)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 10</td>
<td>525   4.16 (4.91)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 12</td>
<td>474   3.48 (4.28)</td>
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<td>Self reports</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression age 12</td>
<td>583   2.71 (4.81)</td>
<td>144   3.34 (5.24)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety age 12</td>
<td>582   7.24 (3.04)</td>
<td>145   7.80 (2.86)</td>
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</table>

Table 2. **DZ twins** - Mean and standard Deviation of mothers’, teachers’ and children’s report of emotional problems according to classroom separation status at 5 and 7 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional problems</th>
<th>Not Separated (NS)</th>
<th>Separated (S)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>DZ twins</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N     Mean (SD)</td>
<td>N     Mean (SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother reports</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>504   6.50 (5.38)</td>
<td>168   8.41 (6.81)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 7</td>
<td>506   6.07 (5.70)</td>
<td>168   7.47 (5.95)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 10</td>
<td>490   6.49 (5.91)</td>
<td>168   7.62 (5.66)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 12</td>
<td>494   6.45 (5.91)</td>
<td>163   7.47 (5.30)</td>
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<td>Teacher reports</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5</td>
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<td>167   6.39 (6.07)</td>
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<td>Age 7</td>
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<td>167   6.17 (6.41)</td>
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<td>Anxiety age 12</td>
<td>492   7.70 (3.13)</td>
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$^{22}$ The p values show whether the scores are statistically relevant - anything under 0.5 shows that there is a significant record.
Table 3. **MZ twins** - Mean and standard Deviation of mothers’, teachers’ and children’s report of emotional problems according to classroom separation status at 12 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional problems</th>
<th>MZ twins</th>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.60 (5.57)</td>
<td>6.45  (5.78)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mother reports**

| Age 10 | 265 | 4.43 (5.54) | 611 | 5.13 (6.12) | 0.18 |
| Age 12 | 287 | 3.49 (4.36) | 673 | 4.71 (5.77) | 0.00 |

**Teacher reports**

| Age 10 | 238 | 6.94 (5.90) | 555 | 6.88 (5.91) | 0.91 |
| Age 12 | 242 | 6.96 (5.82) | 563 | 6.47 (5.53) | 0.32 |

**Self reports**

| Depression age 12 | 291 | 2.71 (4.85) | 677 | 3.14 (5.35) | 0.30 |
| Anxiety age 12    | 291 | 7.54 (2.96) | 677 | 7.58 (3.01) | 0.88 |

Table 4. **DZ twins** - Mean and standard Deviation of mothers’, teachers’ and children’s report of emotional problems according to classroom separation status at 12 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional problems</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.40 (5.41)</td>
<td>5.04  (5.80)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>559</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.26 (5.23)</td>
<td>4.90  (5.74)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mother reports**

| Age 10 | 242 | 6.97 (5.22) | 560 | 3.23 (5.38) | 0.59 |
| Age 12 | 242 | 7.97 (2.70) | 560 | 7.62 (3.16) | 0.14 |

**Teacher reports**

| Age 10 | 209 | 4.40 (5.41) | 456 | 5.04 (5.80) | 0.21 |
| Age 12 | 242 | 4.26 (5.23) | 559 | 4.90 (5.74) | 0.19 |

**Self reports**

| Depression age 12 | 242 | 3.00 (5.22) | 560 | 3.23 (5.38) | 0.59 |
| Anxiety age 12    | 242 | 7.97 (2.70) | 560 | 7.62 (3.16) | 0.14 |