

## FAQs for Grandparents of Twins, Triplets or More!

Answers to frequent questions asked by grandparents of twins, triplets or more. You should also read Tamba's factsheet, [Being a Grandparent to Twins, Triplets or More](#) and [Grandparents' Personal Stories](#) that we produced along with these FAQs.

### FAQ 1 - What can I do to prepare for the arrival of my grandchildren?

With all the talk of learning as you go along and from experience, you might wonder what you can do now to help prepare you for the arrival of your grandchildren? The key to being ready is to gather as much information and sources of support as you can for yourself as well as the parents-to-be and your grandchildren, before they arrive.

You could get in touch with other grandparents of multiples and go along to antenatal or special multiples groups with your son / daughter before the birth. At the request of our grandparent community, Tamba are developing a secret Facebook group for grandparents, so if you'd like to join this group, contact [louisebowman@tamba.org.uk](mailto:louisebowman@tamba.org.uk) for details.

**“ Contact TAMBA and accept all help when offered. Attend any coffee mornings with other grandparents.”**

It may also be useful preparation to get yourself fit and healthy and try to sort out the important things in your own life that you may have been putting off. That way there is less to worry about in the early days after your grandchildren arrive. Practical things like buying a few baby essentials either for your own home when the grandchildren visit or to give to the parents is also great preparation.

**“ Seek out information about twins and multiples and family issues around having twins and multiples, e.g. using Tamba publications, books, websites etc.”**

**“ Learn as much as you can about multiple births before their arrival. Also learn about the possibility of them being premature and the Special Care Baby Unit because it can be a scary time and if you are prepared you might be better able to support your son / daughter.”**



### FAQ 2 - I've heard multiple birth pregnancies are high risk - is that true?

A multiple pregnancy is classed as more high risk than a single pregnancy, so the expectant mother will be attending more hospital appointments than if she were expecting one baby. The mother will be regularly and closely monitored, as the pregnancy progresses, by a range of healthcare professionals. Useful information is available from the NHS in their [NICE Guidelines for Multiple](#)

[Pregnancy](#) which give more details about what you can expect. It's also worth reading [Tamba's Healthy Multiple Pregnancy Guide](#).

It might be helpful, if the mother is happy with the idea, to attend some of her appointments with her, especially if problems arise and a difficult pregnancy and birth are anticipated.

It will be useful to become as informed as possible about the progress of the pregnancy, so that you can try and remain calm to support the parents who may be very worried. Often there is a lot of information to take in and decisions to be made, so it may be helpful to attend with the mother if the partner cannot be present.

Some hospitals run special twin and triplet antenatal courses, which are another great source of information. Not all hospitals run these special antenatal courses but Tamba run a variety of courses right across the UK. The most popular is the regional two-hour seminar called [Practical Preparing for Parenthood](#) which is run by trained facilitators who are all parents of twins or triplets themselves. This course is also run as an online webinar. Details can be found on [our website](#).

If you do not attend any of these courses or appointments, make a point of asking the parents-to-be about all the information they have been told. Not only will it demonstrate an interest, it will improve your understanding and may well help them to consolidate the information and come to decisions themselves.

### FAQ 3 - We live quite a distance from our grandchildren-to-be, how can we still be involved and supportive?

However you decide to keep in touch, as a long-distance grandparent you will need the help of your own children to make this possible. Discuss your concerns and ask for their help and cooperation in maintaining a close relationship with your grandchildren.

Your grandchildren are being born into the era of technology and will likely be taught at an increasingly young age to use computers and tablets, mobile phones, interactive television, the internet and various other techy things. Naturally one of the best ways to keep in touch when you live a long distance from your family is to utilise this technology! Mobile phones and webcams now provide live video chat capacity so you can see your grandchildren when talking to them. Children are owning (or able to use their parents) mobile phones at an increasingly younger age. Use this to your advantage and phone them at a time you know they will be able to chat to you, for example when you know they will be in the car on the way back from a club!

If you are not sure or confident about how to use these types of devices, I'm sure your children might be able to teach you, or there are various free courses in which you can learn and improve your confidence. Beyond Skype and digital photos and the routine 'how was your day' messages, you can interact more fully with your grandchildren by doing things like playing online card or board games with them.



Don't underestimate the power of a letter for staying in touch with older grandchildren! Not only will they be excited to receive their very own letters, but it will also be really helpful for improving their education, giving them a chance to practice spelling, writing and handwriting whilst developing a special relationship with you. Of course these letters can also be exchanged via email along with photos, virtual greeting cards and other little things which keep communication open and help build a warm and loving relationship between you and your grandchildren.

If you live a long way away then you might find it better to arrange longer stays when you can visit. Some grandparents have even still managed to provide regular childcare whilst living a long distance away!

**“ I feel like I lead two lives. My grandchildren live too far away to travel to daily, so I stay over a few days each week. I have done this since the start and it works well for us all.”**

If regular visits really are not an option, it might be possible to arrange a family holiday annually or to meet in the middle between your two homes? However much you see them or don't, the most important thing is to make the most of any time and communication you do have with your grandchildren.

### FAQ 4 - Why is it so important to treat twins, triplets or more as individuals?

It is important to treat twins, triplets or more as individuals because... they are individuals!

Non-identical multiples are no more similar than any other sibling pair; they simply share a birthday. Identical twins or triplets might share DNA and look incredibly similar but they usually develop very different personalities including their preferences, their skills and their temperaments too.

Offering choices to each child is very important and allows them to develop their own likes and dislikes. When they are small, choices such as what clothes to wear, or which toy they want to play with, encourages independence and individuality. You may find they choose exactly the same things! Or they may not! As they grow older, it can also be used as a very useful tool to disperse jealously and unhealthy levels of competition if each child has developed their own sense of self and has gone down their own path.

Being a twin or triplet and sharing throughout your life can be challenging. Here at Tamba we believe that children and families should be supported in helping their multiples develop opportunities for individuality. There is more information on this on our [website](#). Each child must be given the opportunity to grow up and enjoy the journey of self-discovery and self reliance.

Twins are often said to have a very special bond, but that doesn't mean they have to do everything together. In the same way that couples do not have to spend every moment together. It is often good for twins, triplets or more to have experiences on their own and then come back together afterwards to share these experiences with their sibling(s).

Mums and Dads of multiples may have limited time to give one-to-one attention to each child. So an important role of a grandparent of multiples could be to spend more one-to-one time with each grandchild. You could have one child at a time over to stay, giving you special time with just them, whilst allowing the parents to have more individual time with the other child / children.

Here are some tips from grandparents of multiples on individuality:

**“ Try not to label them as twins so that their individuality shines through. Make sure that their older sister/s and brother/s still have special times with you. And love 'em all loads for who they are!”**

“ Treat them as individuals but realise at times they will want the same thing. Getting the balance right is not always straightforward.”

“ Don't favour one above the other, though this applies to parents and grandparents of more than one child, regardless of twins etc. Enjoy them and celebrate their individuality, but also celebrate their twinness.”



## LINKS TO OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Here are a range of additional sources of information and support for grandparents of twins, triplets or more:

### Grannynet

This is the definitive website for grandmothers. Here you'll find trusted advice and friendly chat, combining modern knowledge with traditional values.

[www.grannynet.co.uk](http://www.grannynet.co.uk)

### Age UK - computer training courses

Age UK offer free computer training courses that may come in useful for keeping in touch with your children and your grandchildren.

[www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning/technology-and-internet/computer-training-courses](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning/technology-and-internet/computer-training-courses)

### Family Lives

Family Lives offer support and advice for parents and families including grandparents.

[www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/stepfamilies/stepfamilies-and-the-wider-family/grandparents-and-stepfamilies](http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/stepfamilies/stepfamilies-and-the-wider-family/grandparents-and-stepfamilies)

### Grandparents Plus

A national charity which champions the vital role of grandparents and the wider family in children's lives - especially when they take on the caring role in difficult family circumstances.

[www.grandparentsplus.org.uk](http://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk)

### The Grandparents' Association

A national charity which supports all grandparents and their families. They not only celebrate the joys of grandparenting, but their helpline and their expert advice is there to help you, whatever your problem.

[www.grandparents-association.org.uk](http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk)

Remember that you can also call **Tamba's Twinline** on 0800 138 0509. Twinline is Tamba's free telephone helpline open 365 days a year from 10am to 1pm and 7pm to 10pm. Twinline's trained volunteers are there to listen and support parents, grandparents and anyone caring for twins, triplets or more. All our volunteers are parents of twins or triplets themselves.



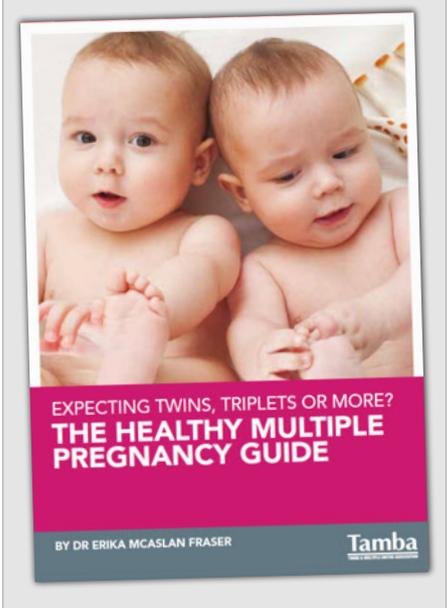
## GRANDPARENTS' FACTSHEET

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

## HEAR WHAT OTHER GRANDPARENTS OF MULTIPLES HAVE TO SAY

To accompany this factsheet, Tamba have put together a compilation of stories from other grandparents of twins, triplets or more. 'Grandparents' Personal Stories' features lots of experiences from grandparents written in their own words, and includes lots more useful advice.

### The Healthy Multiple Pregnancy Guide



Thank you for downloading our factsheet. Feedback from our user community is very important to Tamba. Please complete this survey to help us continue to ensure we meet the needs of our community: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Tambafactsheetfeedback>