

Grandparents' Personal Stories

Grandparents of multiples share their personal experiences below. You should also read our [Being a Grandparent to Twins, Triplets or More](#) factsheet and our [Grandparents' FAQs](#) that Tamba produced along with these personal stories.

Janet Bugden, Nana to 20 month-old twins, shares her tips for being a grandparent to twins:

I'm Nana to my son and his wife's three lovely children. Their older son is three and the twins are twenty months. I have two older grandchildren as well.

My biggest challenge, personally, as a grandparent? Well a challenge either gets the better of us and stops us in our tracks, or it alters our course. For me, retired early from teaching special needs children, and now suffering with anxiety issues and heart problems, the challenge was just what I needed. There was no choice; I had to rise to the occasion.

So I armed myself with all the books and information I could lay my hands on, all of my own experience that I could draw on, and all that I knew I had in me. Knowledge is a powerful thing.

Long before the twins arrived, as their mummy got bigger and bigger (and the summer got hotter and hotter) I would often spend a day with them, from 7am in the morning when daddy went off to work, until 6pm in the evening. I took meals to stock the fridge, helping out with housework where I could and loading washing machines etc. so that mum could spend time with her little lad.

Often they would come to my house and I tried to provide a home-from-home. I had all the equipment that might be needed for a toddler (as the older child then was) from potties to drink cups, all manner of toys and

games, stair-gates and a high-chair. Mum could pop her little lad into the car without a second thought, not worrying if she'd forgotten anything.

When the twins arrived the routine continued. I'd be there when needed, not necessarily to cuddle a baby, but to get on with the jobs round their house, to help keep to baby routines, to play with whoever needed playing with, scooping up crying babies, making cups of coffee and providing tins full of baking - intended for the family, but often devoured by other visitors.

Now visits to 'Nana's house' meant having microwave sterilisers, bottle warmers, baby mats, and baby rockers (times two), toys to cater for everyone and kitchen cupboard locks; these children are all over the place! Time went on and I was making puréed food ready to stock their freezer rather than home-made meals to stock their fridge.

So my tip to other grandparents of twins - make your home a home-from-home; a haven and oasis for mum and dad, knowing everything is at the ready and there's support on hand for the children. The family can come at a moments notice, and often do!

For the children it's the certainty of Nana's house; everything is as it should be and where it always is. They can find their own toys, books etc. and get stuck in. They're all completely different little characters so collecting the toys and books that they will be able to play with together is a challenge in itself, but so much fun. (Thankfully there's a huge market for selling things on again when you're finished with them!) Certainty for the older sibling as well, after all he knows the ropes and is very much in

charge of proceedings. Plenty of time reserved just for him - special times for a story and a cuddle.

Whatever else may happen in their lives, Nana and 'Nana's House' - they're a sure thing.

Vanessa Guagenti, Nonna to 16 month-old identical twin girls, tells us how being local has helped her support her daughter and grandchildren:



I'm a grandmother known as Nonna (my husband is Italian) to identical twin girls who are 16 months old and they are our younger daughter's first children.

We live very close by to our daughter and this is a godsend as we are needed for both help with the babies and emotional support for her.

When our daughter first broke the news to us, after her twelve week scan, that she was expecting twins and identical ones at that, I was overjoyed

and shell-shocked all in one go!

Then the elation seeped away a little when she began to explain the difficulties that could arise during an identical twin pregnancy, the worst being the Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) which, very briefly, is where one twin donates their blood to the other and this is equally dangerous to both babies. This can only affect identical twins. However, the percentage of this happening is only about 15%.

Unfortunately TTTS did present itself in about the 28th week of her pregnancy and, because of this, the girls were born by C-section at 31 weeks. However, I am very pleased to report that after a difficult first few weeks, two bundles of joy joined the family!

As grandmother I play an important part in both my daughter's and the twins' lives, giving both physical and emotional support. Twins are hard work and sleep-deprivation for the parents is probably one of the hardest things they have to cope with and as a grandmother I am there to step in with help and advice when the going gets tough, and sometimes even staying over to give the husband some sleep as he has to work!

It was all a bit scary at first but it's amazing how all the old instincts come tumbling back and you become a dab hand again at nappy-changing and rocking babies to sleep. Mastering the new state-of-the-art pushchair was a feat in itself, but now I am a whiz with it!

I now look after the girls two days a week, as my daughter has returned to work part time. It is hard work but I can honestly say it is worth every moment and I feel so proud walking down the street pushing the pushchair and enjoying all the admiring smiles and comments which twins inevitably bring.

I would just like to finish by saying that despite all of the hard work, being the grandmother of twins is the most rewarding and wonderful experience.

As they get older and their personalities emerge, the joy of seeing them interact and play with each other is wonderful.

Jill Tatham, Grandma to 18 month-old twins, tells us how twins are twice the effort and more than twice the fun:

Twins are twice the effort, but much more than twice the fun! And the more you help, the closer the bond, which is just fantastic.

Now the twins are 18 months old, walking, talking and very entertaining - one advantage of multiples of course is that they often entertain each other, which everyone really appreciates - and the (now) four year-old enjoys playing with them too.

I was surprised that my daughter and son-in-law had under-estimated the amount of help they would need with the twins, in spite of having a fairly demanding two year-old already. I was older and wiser and cancelled all my voluntary work for fifteen months so that I could help them all - the two year-old took much of my time early on. I greatly admire parents of multiples who have to manage alone.

From the day they were born we all made sure that we always spoke to each of the twins individually, with eye contact, and called them by name every time. They responded to their names amazingly early.

I happen to be small, never strong, and was already 67, so I had to work at keeping myself fit and be careful about lifting. A 'crook' grandma is no use at all! After about nine months of really hard work things started to get easier - walking helped enormously - and the fun began!

When the twins were about 15 months old I was very pleased to hear my daughter say she actually felt sorry for parents of singles, because it must be so boring!

Marguerite Palmer tells us how even her experience as a midwife didn't prepare her for the constant care twins require:



When my daughter phoned from New York to say she was pregnant but having 'awful' morning sickness I laughed and said, "don't worry you are either laying down a good placenta or you are having twins."

We welcomed our first grandchildren Michael and William, identical twin boys, born in London, who are now three years-old. We were prepared for premature babies as they were delivered at 36 weeks by caesarean.

Michael's first few days were spent in intensive care and William, who was jaundiced and although with Mum, was in an incubator under an infrared light.

Amy's determination to breastfeed both was admirable and meant long walks to the NICU.

I should say I am a trained midwife but, gosh, I never realised how constant the care of twins is. Where did the days go? Yes, of course they did spend most of their time sleeping but then there is so much to do!

For the first year of their lives I travelled to London, Monday to Thursday, to help and it was sheer joy to be involved in their care. I believe firmly that the bond I have with them was fostered during those early days. I am 'Grannie', and the 'ie' at the end is to distinguish from their other 'Granny'.

My advice to any new grandparents of twins is firstly learning how the equipment works, especially the pram. Practice putting it together and up and down; it is an engineering feat. Secondly encourage breastfeeding at the same

time, but reassure the Mum that topping up with expressed milk can help share the work. Even if one twin is sleeping it doesn't hurt to wake them for dual care.

Finally do whatever is needed without fuss and keep reassuring the parents and the babies that they are all doing fine (babies love being talked to). Bite that tongue if necessary, because the parents get very, very tired.

They are now in Edinburgh and 'Face Time' is the saviour for me. They tell me their news, show me their gardening, drawings, toys and books and always ask to see their favourite items in our house. We send them postcards from wherever we are in the world on holiday and these are kept in their boxes so hopefully when they are older they will be interested in places and stamps.

Libby Mesquitta, Grandy to twin girls, started a baby fund to help her daughter:



When I found out my daughter was pregnant I bought a 'Baby Fund' money box for her. A few weeks later she rang and told me I had better buy another one as she was expecting twins! I screamed in delight - such a wonderful, exciting bonus.

Our non-identical granddaughters were born eight weeks early after my daughter went into labour, and weighed 3lbs 12oz and 3lbs 13oz - such tiny little things but so adorable. They stayed in hospital for only three weeks and the care they and their Mum and Dad received at Kingston Hospital was amazing.

They are now approaching two years

old and are fun loving, happy little girls who seem to love seeing us (their Grandy and Papa). It has been such a privilege to watch them developing and to see their interaction with each other. They egg each other on and if one does something she shouldn't the other one immediately follows suit! They talk to each other and play together really well - most of the time. When one is hurt though the other one gets quite upset.

It has been hard work, especially when they were tiny, but their Mum and Dad are a great team and my husband and I have lived near enough to be able to help out if needed.

Bath-time, when they were babies, was quite challenging and tiring but is now a fun (although quite damp!) experience.

I thought it might be difficult to give the girls equal attention but it has actually been easy even when trying to read to them both sitting on my knee. This may possibly get more of a problem as they get bigger!

Going out with them to the park or zoo needs having eyes in the back of your head as they do tend to go off in opposite directions sometimes. Reins are a must when they aren't in their buggy!

I had never had anything to do with twins before but it is an amazing and joyous experience and I feel so blessed to have them in my life.

Linda Davies, Nanny to boy-girl twins aged two, shares how life changed when twins arrived:

The day I got the phone call from my daughter saying, "Help Mum, It's Twins!" we knew life would never be the same again. What a shock! There aren't any twins in our family history. I was already Nanny to her two year-old son and very soon I would have two extra little people to love and help care for.

My daughter was induced at 38 weeks and in just an hour and with just gas and air (a positive, you do hear



some horror stories) our beautiful babies arrived - a boy and a girl. I was thrilled to be at the birth along with the babies Daddy. Beware, we had bought tiny baby clothes but as they were both around 7lbs they didn't fit!

In the days that followed life seemed like a constant whirl of feeding, changing nappies, washing and drying clothes and finding ways to manage two babies. It was also important to make sure our little two year-old didn't feel left out. It was hard work and as I was living with my daughter at the time I can remember falling into bed most nights exhausted and aching all over, but at least I didn't have to get up for the night feeds! Just a tip - if one baby wakes up to feed in the night my daughter woke the other and fed them too otherwise you are up all night!

Weaning them proved really easy, messy but easy and although you are probably advised not to, one spoon and one bowl makes life easier.

They are now almost 18 months old and very mobile. I wish I could say life is easier but in my daughters words, "It is a bit like herding two little drunk people home from the pub." They totter around, never go in the same direction (unless they see the dishwasher open) and are always falling over and bumping into things.

Despite this, what a special joy they are. Both are very different. Our boy loves cars, trains and tracks and follows his big brother everywhere, usually into

mischievous and with no fear, and our little girl is a princess who loves to dance, talk to herself in the mirror and play quietly with her toys.

We have found that it is worth teaching them to climb the stairs as early as you can and how to come back down safely. We have stair gates but as they are getting heavier carrying them up and down is a struggle for me. Could I have prepared myself in anyway? I am not sure. We have all learnt along the way and I am certainly more confident looking after them by myself now.

It has been invaluable to keep in as much of a routine as possible but with two little ones, to quote one of my daughters' sayings, "Some days you just have to put on your boots and dance."

I would not change things for the world.

Patricia Higgins shares her experience of being a grandmother to identical twin boys:

I am a grandparent to identical twin boys aged 2½ years old. Jacob and Calan are the third and fourth children of my daughter Katherine's. She has a 15 year old daughter, Melissa, and 10 year old son, Luke.

I am called Pawpaw, as my daughter's older children are dual heritage Chinese British. I was much younger when Melissa was born and did not want to be called Gran or Nan but rather liked the Chinese term for maternal grandmother. So the younger children also call me Pawpaw (or as Calan can manage 'Gawgaw').

It was great surprise to find out that Katherine was having twins, as there are no twins in the family, and totally unexpected (as it is for so many). We looked forward to the boys' arrival with great excitement.

It was a hard birth as there were two of them, and Jacob was struggling to come into the world so Katherine had to have a caesarean section, which she was very disappointed about.

There have been many challenging times caring for the boys, as gorgeous as they are. They are very demanding, not the best sleepers (currently waking at 5 am on a regular basis), insist on going their own way, usually in opposite directions, and the 'terrible twos' prevail. When we take them to public events e.g. friends' wedding and recently to watch my performance in a choral concert at the Liverpool Philharmonic hall, the boys' behaviour has been loud, demanding and difficult to manage, necessitating in my daughter having to take them out of the venue.

The biggest thing I have learned is how to support my daughter to ignore the ignorant few who turn and stare and make her feel uncomfortable and like a 'poor' mother, which she certainly is not. She is a fantastic mother who juggles the needs of all four of her children.

I've also learned how it is important for the parents and grandparents of twins to support each other through the challenging times, because it is so much harder with two. I also offer practical support by having the boys overnight once a week so that Katherine and her husband manage to get a night's sleep.

They are of course a joy, very funny and very loving (when not tantruming). They grow and change daily. They can be demanding and often tend to prefer me as I find it hardest to say, "no," to them. You'd think I would know better, but as a grandparent I have greater patience than I did when my children were young, and I was working, and trying to do everything else, and be everything to everyone. I also can give them back and have plenty of recovery time, which my daughter does not, so I enjoy my time with the boys and my other grandchildren 'cos it doesn't half go fast and before you know it they are teenagers.

Tony Friedlander, grandfather to twin girls, shares a grandfather's viewpoint:

We live in Colchester and have one married daughter, who moved to Devon eight years ago. We sold our business in 2005 so when she became pregnant in 2010, we secretly bought a flat near her, as we knew she would wish to return to work after the first year. When her daughter was born in April 2011, she and her husband were paranoid about sterilising everything; using packets of wet-wipes by the ton and panicking if the baby should pick up a speck of dirt from the floor. We told them it would be different when the second came along. They disagreed, but then twin girls arrived in December 2013 and there was precious little time to be so fussy.

We are spending far more time in Devon than we envisaged as her husband now works away all over the UK or at his Surrey head office several days every week.

The pressures on her are simply enormous as she has again had to return to work part-time in a highly pressurised job she luckily enjoys. So she now has a day nanny three days a week, but even so, we also get called upon more and more, as we know she feels guilty not spending enough time with the children, but I do resent it when she is very short-tempered with both of us but we have to keep schtum, which I find very hard.

The twins are lovely but especially challenging, very noisy, and they copy everything their four year-old sister does and are into everything.

The other grandparents help out when they can but not as much as we do, and at the age of 70 I feel torn as I feel my own life is slipping away. My wife wants to move permanently to Devon, which has caused a huge strain on our own relationship as I do not, especially if son-in-law ever gets promoted again.

Now I am retired I want to travel but it is impossible to fit it in, although we both manage to play some golf, tennis and bridge in Devon (I get more chance than my wife). Otherwise I am cooped

up in a flat whilst the house and garden in Colchester, which I love since we have completely modernised it, is increasingly neglected, as is our own social life.

At times I admit do get very depressed as I do feel trapped - this may sound selfish, but we both worked incredibly hard and long hours for many years and I have had heart problems and am acutely aware that will pass this way only once.

Ironically, I was adopted by a much older woman, never had grandparents and neither did my wife, so am pleased we can give our daughter much-needed support, but just wish it wasn't so full on.

I say all this not out of self-pity but to show the other side of the coin.

Chris and Mick Riches share their experience of being Ma-Ma and Pop to twin girls:

We are grandparents known as Ma-Ma and Pop to twin girls Hollie and Emilia. They are ten month-old non-identical twins and the first children of our daughter and son in law.

When the girls came home from hospital I offered to stay for two weeks or for however long Emma and Rob wanted me. I ended up staying and helping for two months!

New parents think they know how hard it will be, but it's the sleepless nights that seem to be the worst thing. I was there to help, but mostly to reassure them. I did not want to take over and then leave them feeling they did not know what to do. I said what I thought may be a good thing to try but also asked them what they thought they should do.

I didn't need to worry as their instincts were almost always right. The girls firstly slept in 'Moses' baskets separately, but after five months they did not settle so well so we tried them in one cot, and that worked well. At six months they went in to their own

cots in the nursery with both cots pushed together, so they could see each other and touch if they wanted.

Hollie had colic for the first few months and this was hard for us all. She would cry for ages before going off to sleep. If you find you are not coping well with this please always ask for help, never feel you should be able to cope. No sleep and a constant crying baby is hard, and it's easy to start to feel you're not coping, knowing you also have the other one to feed and deal with. I know as my first child had colic and projectile vomiting, but with help it soon passes. He is now 35 and none the worse for his ailments! We have the girls to stay and give their parents a break, and love making baby food for them. It keeps us out of mischief!

Our daughter has gone back to work three days a week and the girls come and stay. It is hard but the two of us love taking them out. A trip just to the shops takes ages as everyone wants to talk and ask about them; luckily we have the time and love to show them off.

We still help at their home if asked, and love every moment of it. So enjoy them while you can - they soon grow up.

Fiona Print, Grandma to identical twins Joel and Evan, and their older sister Abigail:

I am 'Grandma' to my daughter Sarah's and her husband David's three children, Abigail, aged five, and identical twins Joel and Evan, aged three.

The day I picked up my office phone to hear Sarah telling me that she had just had her twelve week scan and was expecting twins, was the day I had to decide whether to take retirement or not. Decision made - the boys were MCMA twins and therefore would necessarily be born by Caesarean section at 32 weeks followed by a spell in special care. Since Abigail was only just two years old we felt that I should be around

a lot for a couple of months before the boys were born to provide a consistent, stable figure for Abigail when it was time for the birth and the weeks following.

This worked really well for Abigail (although involved me commuting weekly from Lancashire to London!) and she accepted the boys into her life without feeling left out or upset, despite Sarah and David being in and out of the hospital with the boys.

I continued staying with the family regularly for the months that followed. My daughter went back to work as a school teacher when the boys were one year old and I offered to help look after the children while Sarah was at work.

Initially I was quite lonely but when I started to go to playgroups etc. I realised how many grandparents there were helping out with childcare, many travelling quite long distances and staying over for a night or two every week. I was the only one looking after twins though!

Things I've learnt as a grandparent of multiples: You are an essential support to their parents. My being so closely involved with daily life meant that my daughter was able to breastfeed the twins and also have time with Abigail on a daily basis - a very difficult feat if she'd be looking after the three single-handed. My daughter tells me that the never ending supply of food and drinks whilst she nursed was a God-send as was my willingness to get stuck into the washing!

I'm not as young as I was so I need all my energy for the day - my daughter (and her husband when needed) did the night feeds so I wouldn't miss out on my sleep.

By going out to playgroups etc I soon got talking to the other mums and grandparents. You'll soon be having 'coffee dates'.

If you're 'in situ' then be sure to make time for yourself. An hour or two doing your own thing can really energise you. Life can be hectic, noisy and emotional at times but also very rewarding. If I hadn't been able to be involved with the children so much I would not have had the bond that I have now - and I wouldn't have missed this last three years for anything!

Gail Price, Nana to 31 month-old girl-boy twins:

I am a grandma, known as Nana, to girl-boy twins. They are 31 months old and they are my son's and daughter in law's first born.

We first had the twins overnight on our own when they were twelve weeks old and I found it a little difficult to ask about dos and don'ts, but once I'd asked I felt so much more confident (my daughter in law wrote it all down). This was invaluable and ever since, when we have them or their younger sister, a little aide-memoire comes with them.

The feeling is to go out and buy everything for your own house. Don't. It can be costly and they actually don't use it that much. We have bought a couple of good quality essentials by searching for sale sites. The most stressful thing for me was putting up travel cots!

Marny Castledine, Nana to twin girls Olive and Isabelle, shares her experiences:



When our only daughter gave us the news that she was pregnant, my husband was only months away from retirement and we made a decision to move closer to the new family at that time.

However, several weeks and a scan later revealed that 'the baby' was to be twins. We hastily brought forward our plans and arranged the 100 mile move to our new home. We arrived when our identical twin granddaughters, Olivia Rose and Isabelle Grace, were 10 weeks

old with the post maternity leave plan being to provide the two days a week child care when my daughter returned to work.

We were in full 'Nana and Grandpa' mode from day one - even assisting with feeding whilst furniture was being unloaded around us!

We were so proud to parade 'our' baby girls around in their double pram, even though I was sadly never able to 'drive' due to arthritis - a double buggy sometimes seems to have a mind of its own!

Olivia and Isabelle are now three and a half and being located so close has allowed us the opportunity to watch them grow from babies to toddlers to pre-schoolers and being on stand-by to get our hands dirty (literally) when required.

The joy of spending family holidays with them, have them sleep over and be able to take them for ice cream treats is priceless. It is amazing to watch two emerging personalities grow from two outwardly identical little bodies and to watch the interaction in their ever more imaginative pretend play is a unique experience.

We are incredibly fortunate that circumstances have enabled us to move and be less than five minutes away from our family and to be able to see them on an almost daily basis - that certainly isn't the norm for most grandparents. My advice to prospective grandparents of multiples is to do two things: allow space for the new family to grow together but also enjoy every minute you have when 'on duty' or when all together as a family. It is so very rewarding and has the bonus of allowing the parents a little breathing space when needed.

Grandmother Carol Mellor moves in to help her daughter in the early days:

The joy of learning at the twelve week scan that our only daughter was expecting identical twin girls was soon to be replaced by anxiety and fear when the twins were diagnosed with TTTS.

An operation was needed immediately otherwise both girls would die. The scan had revealed a growing amniotic sac around one tiny baby and a shrinking sac around the other.

Keyhole surgery, involving a tiny camera and a laser, was successfully performed at the foetal medicine Unit at St George's Hospital in Tooting, London, with her anxious husband. We waited and prayed. The scan two weeks later confirmed, they were both alive and well. We were all overjoyed.

The girls were delivered at 34 weeks by Caesarean at St Peter's, Chertsey in Surrey. Each weighed just over 5lbs. Both had small holes in their hearts and they would be monitored over the following year.

They were a challenge to feed as they were delivered before they could breastfeed and my daughter was determined that she would feed them herself. So, for two weeks she was expressing milk to go into bottles. Then she left St Peter's for home where they continued to be very fractious and windy taking small feeds frequently.

As their father had recently been promoted and needed to do the London commute Monday to Friday, I moved in as they were too far away for me to commute every day.

My daughter and I shared the double bed in the guest bedroom, propped up on pillows each with a baby on our chests listening to the World Service. Even now 'Sail Away' and the 'Shipping Forecast' in the middle of the night, bring it all back.

The two-hourly feeding went on for three months but the girls were very gradually becoming more settled and they appeared healthy. We evolved a routine where I got two hours uninterrupted sleep from 7am to 9am when my daughter got up with the girls and her husband. Then I walked the babies from 9.30am to 11.30am so my daughter could have her only uninterrupted sleep.

By six months the girls were more manageable, although showing no sign of sleeping through the night. My daughter ceased to breastfeed and I reduced my time to two days a week.

My daughter and her husband had decided to move nearer. Now they are

only half an hour away and my beautiful three year-old granddaughters have a baby brother but the bond which was established in those early months will go on for forever.

Carolyn Barker, Grandma to fraternal twin boys:

I am Grandma to four year-old fraternal twin boys. It came as a bit of a shock to find out that my eldest son and his wife were expecting twins. As my daughter-in-law experienced quite a lot of difficulties during the early stages of her pregnancy, we hardly dared to believe that everything would turn out well, and we would eventually have the privilege of being grandparents to twins.

Thankfully, the boys, although slightly premature and having to spend a couple of weeks in Special Care, were fit and healthy.

After a few months, mum had to return to work, and we offered to look after the boys two days a week, as the cost of childcare for the two of them was so expensive. The first few weeks were quite challenging for us, as it was mainly a case of getting them into a routine which suited everybody.

As a grandparent, everything seems to take so much more effort, and I must admit, we did get tired by the afternoon. It always seemed to be the case that one of them would have a nap, while the other was still wide awake - meaning that we never really got a break. However, persistence pays off, and eventually, we got them into a good routine whereby they both had 'quiet' time together - so even if one was still awake, they were still happy to lie down and have a rest (with their dummy!)

Even now, at the age of four, we continue to have a quiet half hour after dinner, where the boys can either watch TV, or read their books. It at least gives us time to recharge our batteries, if nothing else!

Despite all the challenges of the early days, we now find that the boys bring such joy into our lives. They are so much

more independent, we can reason with them and hold a proper conversation. They play well together, and being a pair, they have learnt so much about sharing with one another.

All in all, the past four years has been a fabulous experience, which has enriched our lives greatly.

Jan Pound, Grandma to six year-old twin girls and seven year-old twin boys:

Having waited, with thinly disguised impatience, to become a grandmother I suddenly found myself a grandmother to four within sixteen months!

My daughter gave birth to twin girls followed swiftly by my daughter-in-law producing twin boys.

Initially the challenges of feeding, changing and moving them around were enormous but now that they are six and seven respectively the rewards are enormous.

They are such fun and have formed their own little gang which is lovely to see. I think the secret is to never treat each set of twins as a pair. It is important to form individual relationships based on their own personalities that is personal to them and to you.

Being a twin is such a special blessing and I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to experience the joys of this unique bond at first hand. We have such fun. Hopefully the bond we have forged now will stand us in good stead when we reach the dreaded teenage years!

Marion and Geoff Clark, grandparents to eight year-old twins and three and a half year-old twins:

We are Grandma and Grandad to twins - twice. Our younger daughter, Liz, and her husband, Ian, have identical twin boys, James and Jack, aged eight and non-identical twin girls, Evie and Zoe, age three and a half. We also have two older grandchildren belonging to our eldest daughter.

The boys suffered from Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) which was well monitored at St Michael's Hospital, Bristol.

They were born at 32 weeks. Liz went back to work when the boys were six months old as I retired. We started looking after the boys one day a week, so we could take them to the Twins Club she had been attending. This led to us taking over running the club.

Just before the boys were due to start school Liz again became pregnant and it was two again! Evie and Zoe were born at 38 weeks. When Liz returned to work it was back to twins club with the girls.

We soon learned that the way to deal with twins was to be well organised. Our hints and tips are:

1. Follow the daughter's / daughter-in-law's house rules (feeding, sleeping times, etc).
2. Don't do more than you have agreed to without asking.
3. When helping with bottle feeding I tried to alternate which twin I fed.
4. Get everything together before changing nappies or dressing children.
5. Treat all children fairly with individual birthday cards and where practicable presents.
6. Use reins / backpacks with toddlers if necessary - for when they run in opposite directions.
7. Enjoy double smiles, double hugs and double cuddles.

Joan Caller, Nanny to twin girls, aged seven, and twin boys, aged two:



My name is Joan and I am a 62 year-old grandmother (nanny) to my daughters' twin girls Rubie and April, aged seven, and twin boys Blake and Ethan, aged two. Being a nanny to two sets of twins brings challenges just like it does for their parents.

I have been paralysed since a young age and confined to a wheelchair so many people feel I am unable to offer support to my daughter, but this is not the case.

I have looked after both sets of twins for my daughter whilst she continued to work 25 hours a week. We ride on the bus to the shops, access sessions at local children's centres and enjoy home baking together. The boys have definitely been more challenging than the girls but that may just be because I'm getting older!

Offering childcare support to my daughter enabled her family to be financially stable and has given me a way of keeping busy. I get to share their childhood in a special way and know that I am offering much needed support. They all keep me on my toes (wheels) and I love them all very much.

Marlene Dymore, shares her experience of being a grandmother to two sets of twins:

I'm a grandmother, known as Nanny to two sets of twin boys - my eldest

daughter's identical twins, now eight years old, and my youngest daughter's non-identical twins, now three months old. Not forgetting my granddaughter and two 'singleton' grandsons, with my eldest daughter expecting another boy in August.

There is no history of twins in my family, so we really didn't know what to expect when Lucie announced, in 2006, that an early scan showed that she was expecting identical twins. First question: how did they know that they were identical? Apparently it was because there was just one placenta. She was also warned, that because one looked smaller than the other, that it was possible that not both twins would survive. So we also became familiar with another worry with identical twins - Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), which meant regular scans to check on their growth.

Lucie was disappointed that she had to have an elective C-section because her first son was an emergency C-section, but having two healthy, though small, boys soon put everything into perspective. She was determined to breastfeed her babies, and she did for 18 months!

When my youngest daughter became pregnant last year and seemed to be growing quite quickly, she started teasing her partner that she was expecting twins - not believing for a minute that she was! However, her twelve week scan showed two babies and her partner took some convincing that they really were expecting twins!

Although a non-identical twin pregnancy is not considered as risky as identical, it did mean that her babies were growing at a 'normal' rate and for the last few months of her pregnancy we couldn't believe she could get any bigger, but she did! Laura was prepared for a C-section because one of the babies was breach, but thanks to the skill and dedication of the staff, she was able to deliver them both naturally, just thirty minutes apart.

As the mother of three singletons, I am in awe of how well my daughters have coped with two babies, as well as having older children. My main role as a

grandmother is to help with the practical day-to-day stuff - housework, shopping, washing, etc. - to give my daughters more time to relax with their babies - more than rewarded by double cuddles!

From day one, Lucie dressed her boys differently, although it was not always easy to find two sets of clothes that were the 'same but different', but we enjoy the challenge!

When they started school, Lucie was told that their policy was to separate twins, but she stood her ground and they were put in the same class.

At eight years old, they have different personalities, are in different groups at school but still display that special bond that identical twins have (and I still can't tell them apart!).

At three months old, Laura's boys are just beginning to show their individual personalities and are slightly easier to tell apart (but not all the time!) What is not to love about being a grandparent!

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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Also accompanying this factsheet are Tamba's FAQs for grandparents of twins, triplets or more. It features detailed answers to frequently asked questions.

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:
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