This booklet was prepared by the Perth and Districts Multiple Birth Association with selected articles from the Australian Multiple Birth Association.

Revised and reprinted in 2012

This booklet is intended as a guide only. The general information contained within should be used in conjunction with advice from health care professionals such as your obstetrician, paediatrician, child health nurse or midwife.

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We would like to extend to you our congratulations and best wishes to you on being or becoming ‘multiple birth parents’.

The Perth & Districts Multiple Birth Association (Inc) was formed in May 1974. We are a not-for-profit self-help and support group providing information, education, services and support to families with twins, triplets and more. We are affiliated with the Australian Multiple Birth Association. Our members live in the Perth metro area and in many country areas throughout the State.

Our Association aims to provide a means of communication for sharing information on the care and raising of multiple birth children (i.e. twins, triplets, quadruplets and quintuplets) and to:

- Provide education, services, social meetings and functions for our members;
- Support and advocate for families with multiple birth children;
- Be a non-profit and non-sectarian organisation, and
- Cooperate with other groups with related interests, including childcare, development and related research.

Membership is open to all parents and guardians of multiple birth children.

Expectant parents are especially welcome to make contact with the Association and join as prospective members until after the birth of their children, when they then become full members.

Fees

The fee on joining the Association is $45 to full and prospective members (prospective membership entitles expectant parents to full membership benefits). Members can choose a 2 year membership (emailed newsletter only) for $65. For new members joining after 31 December, a half yearly fee of $30 is payable.

An application form can be found in the centre pages of this booklet or visit www.pdmba.org.au
Our Services

The Association has a range of services which may be of help to you. Our Rooms are located on the ground floor of Agnes Walsh House in the Centre for Women’s Health building (next to King Edward Memorial Hospital), on Bagot Road, Subiaco.

Our Rooms are opened by a volunteer for a couple of hours each week for the pick-up and return of equipment, library books and also for joining the Association. Please check our website or ring 9340 1536 for current opening hours.

We have a wide range of pamphlets and information about local support services. Also available is a range of Association merchandise, including bumper stickers, photo magnet frames, stubby holders, pens, hats and t-shirts.

Social Meetings

The Association holds a number of events throughout the year, including parent dinners, family picnics, a Christmas picnic, and Easter picnic and school holiday functions.

Each year functions are held to coincide with Multiple Birth Awareness Week, which is celebrated nationally in March.

Library

We stock an informative selection of books, mostly on twins and triplets, and general child care, which we update with annual purchases.

The library can be especially useful for expectant parents who want to learn as much as possible before the birth of their children. The library also contains a variety of literature for sale including booklets on Breastfeeding Twins, Parenting Twins, Twins in School etc.

Books and magazines are available for hire for one month. We believe our library is the most comprehensive in Western Australia on all aspects of ‘multiples’.

Country members can have library books mailed out to them, though the member will need to pay for the return of the books.

Web Site

The Association’s website at www.pdmba.org.au contains a members-only section with fact sheets and lots of useful information, details of social events, as well as a useful discussion forum. We also have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pdmba.

Hospital Visits

The Association can arrange for hospital visits to the new or expectant mother in most metropolitan and many country hospitals. Visits can occur both before and after your babies arrive. The volunteer
visitor is a member and has already delivered his or her multiples and can be a great source of information and support.

**Newsletter**

Our monthly newsletter “Multiple Productions” is posted or emailed to all members. The newsletter contains articles of interest on multiple birth issues and general parenting and keeps you up to date with ‘multiples’ research. Information on Association activities, social functions, a ‘For Sale/Wanted’ section, Welcome and Birthday pages plus much more is included. This publication keeps you up to date with what is happening in your Association and is produced 11 times a year (every month except January).

**Parent Contacts**

Our Parent Contacts are happy for you to telephone them if you have a problem or query you wish to talk over. Their contact details can be found in the newsletter.

Parent Contacts also arrange expectant parent meetings providing information on multiple births and including a parent panel for questions and real-life experience! Our library is made available during this session and information packs are distributed. Light refreshments are available afterwards and expectant parents are able to mingle and browse the available information.

The Parent Contacts also organise a coffee morning twice a year for new parents and their babies aged under 12 months.

**Coffee Groups**

The Association co-ordinates numerous coffee groups held within the metro area and some country towns. Parents of multiples meet on a regular basis to have a coffee and chat and generally support one another in the task of parenting multiples.

The Coffee Group Contact can advise you of your nearest venue and can also help you to start your own group if there is not one already nearby.

**Premature Birth**

The Association has a Premature Birth Contact who is available to offer support and information to parents who have experienced the premature delivery of their babies.
Bereavement

We have a dedicated Bereavement Contact who can assist parents during difficult times and ensure that information is provided on professional organisations, literature available and other appropriate contacts.

HOM (Higher Order Multiples) Contact

The Association has a person who specifically caters for parents of triplets, quadruplets and quintuplets. The library also has a good range of books on higher order multiples. The HOM Contact will help with the facilitation of donations and any queries regarding higher order multiples.

Help Register

The help register is a list of parents of multiples who have faced certain additional challenges. We can help put you in contact with people who face similar issues to exchange information and provide support.

Equipment Hire

Our equipment hire service offers members subsidised hire of twin breastfeeding pillows, infant seats and twin bassinettes for the Mountain Buggy pram. Please contact the Rooms on 9340 1536 if you wish to place your name on the equipment waiting list.

Equipment can be collected from or returned to the Rooms during opening hours (or at another time by prior arrangement).

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Bond (refundable)</th>
<th>Hire fee per month</th>
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<tr>
<td>Twin Breastfeeding Pillows (8)</td>
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<td>Mountain Buggy Twin Carrycot (2)</td>
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Discounts

The Association has negotiated a number of discounts at stores across the Perth Metropolitan area for members.

An up-to-date list of shops which offer discounts to members is regularly published in our newsletter or available from our Rooms. Members also receive access to the Shoprite discount and benefits scheme, including year round access to FAL stores. For details visit www.shoprite.com.au

Multi-Merchandise

We have many items for sale to members and non-members. To view the latest sale items visit www.pdmba.org.au

Fundraising

Fundraising is an integral and necessary part of our Association. It helps us pay for events during the year and keeps our membership fees down. A number of fundraising initiatives are held throughout the year and we encourage our members and their extended families and friends to participate. We do our utmost to ensure that our fundraising activities are affordable, good quality and in a lot of cases help out fellow multiple parents!

Multiples in School

A forum is held at Agnes Walsh House in September, for parents whose multiples will be starting their schooling in the following year. These evenings provide a useful exchange and gathering of information which may be helpful in making decisions regarding the placement of multiples into same or separate classes. At this forum, an experienced teacher addresses the group, followed by a panel of parents who have faced particular issues with their multiples.

There is aMultiples in School Contact who will be happy to discuss any issues you may be experiencing. The contact number can be found in the newsletter.
MEMBERSHIP FORM

FOR EXPECTANT PARENTS

The membership year runs 1 July to 30 June with all renewals due on 1st July.

Hardcopy posted or PDF (emailed) newsletter options are available.

Please select your preference below:

- $65 for up to 2yrs
- $45 for up to 1yr
- $30* for up to ½ yr

*1/2 yr option only available if joining between the 1st January and 30th June

Name of Parent 1

Name of Parent 2

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Mobile

Email

Date

Are you expecting

- Twins
- Triplets
- Quadruplets

How many weeks pregnant are you?

Expected date of delivery

Which hospital are you booked into?

Details of other children (including surnames please)

Name Gender DOB

Name Gender DOB

Name Gender DOB

Name Gender DOB

How did you find out about us?

- Friends/family
- Doctor
- Child Health Nurse
- Internet
- Other

Continued on next page
Are you happy to be notified of any upcoming events via the above email address?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

Does your child have any specific issues (eg., asthma, reflux, cerebral palsy etc.). If yes please describe
☐ Yes  ☐ No
___________________________________________________________________________

Would you like us to forward your details to the Australian Multiple Birth Association to be added to their mailing list for their FREE magazine?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No
___________________________________________________________________________

Would you like us to register your name with Shoprite to take part in their discount scheme and to receive their membership card (at no cost). For details see www.shoprite.com.au
☐ Yes  ☐ No
___________________________________________________________________________

Payment Options

☐ Cheque
Please make out to Perth & Districts Multiple Birth Association Inc

☐ Direct Deposit
Account Name   Perth & Districts Multiple Birth Association Inc.
BSB    036 302
Account Number   187 047
Your reference   Parent’s Surname

Please print completed form and mail with payment to

P&DMBA
PO Box 410
West Perth WA 6872

or if paying via direct deposit you can email this form to pdmba@hotmail.com

Mail Received  _________________
Payment Cited  _________________
☐ Cheque  ☐ Money Order  ☐ Main DB
☐ Cash  ☐ Electronic Transfer  ☐ Shoprite
Amount  $________  Receipt #
☐ New Members
Processsed  _________
☐ Birthday List  ☐ Newsletter
☐ M/ship Card
#_____________________
☐ Expectant
☐ Email List  sent__________
MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Please select your preference below:

- $65 for up to 2yrs
- $45 for up to 1yr
- $30* for up to 1/2 yr

*1/2 yr option only available if joining between the 1st January and 30th June

Name of Parent 1 ____________________________________________

Name of Parent 2 ____________________________________________

Parents Relationship: ☐ Married/De facto ☐ Separated/Divorced ☐ Other: _______

Address ____________________________________________________ Postcode ________________

Telephone __________________ Mobile __________________

Email __________________ Date ______________

What type of multiples do you have?

- Twins  ☐ B/G  ☐ B/B  ☐ G/G  ☐ Identical?
- Triplets  ☐ B/B/B  ☐ G/G/G  ☐ B/B/G  ☐ G/G/B

Date of Birth: ______________ No. of Pregnancy: ___ Term of Pregnancy: _______ weeks

Is mother/father a multiple? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Identical?

Other multiples in the family?

Baby 1’s Full Name __________________________ Birth Weight ________

Baby 2’s Full Name __________________________ Birth Weight ________

Baby 3’s Full Name __________________________ Birth Weight ________

Details of other children (including surnames please)

Name __________________________ Gender ______ DOB __________

Name __________________________ Gender ______ DOB __________

Name __________________________ Gender ______ DOB __________

Name __________________________ Gender ______ DOB __________

How did you find out about us?

- Friends/family  ☐ Doctor  ☐ Child Health Nurse  ☐ Internet
- ☐ Other

Continued on next page
Do you give permission for us to forward your details to the Australian Twin Registry (they will forward info to you)

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Are you happy to be notified of any upcoming events via the above email address?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Does your child have any specific issues (eg., asthma, reflux, cerebral palsy etc.). If yes please describe

Would you like us to forward your details to the Australian Multiple Birth Association to be added to their mailing list for their FREE magazine?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Would you like us to register your name with Shoprite to take part in their discount scheme and to receive their membership card (at no cost). For details see www.shoprite.com.au

☐ Yes  ☐ No

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Payment Options

☐ Cheque

Please make out to Perth & Districts Multiple Birth Association Inc

☐ Direct Deposit

Account Name  Perth & Districts Multiple Birth Association Inc.
BSB  036 302
Account Number  187 047
Your reference  Parent’s Surname ________________________

Please print completed form and mail with payment to

P&D MBA
PO Box 410
West Perth WA 6872

or if paying via direct deposit you can email this form to pdmba@hotmail.com

Mail Received ____________  OFFICE USE ONLY
Payment Cited ____________
☐ Cheque  ☐ Money Order
☐ Cash  ☐ Electronic Transfer
Amount $ ____________
Receipt # ____________

Processed ________
☐ Main DB  ☐ Birthday List  ☐ Newsletter
☐ Shoprite  ☐ M/ship Card  # ____________
☐ New Members  ☐ Twin Reg  ☐ Email List  sent ____________
Each year, approximately 1 in every 69 births in Western Australia are multiples, with around 500 sets of twins and 5-10 sets of triplets being born each year in WA.

Approximately two thirds of twins are fraternal (dizygotic or DZ) and one third identical (monozygotic or MZ).

Fraternal twins develop from two separate eggs fertilised by two separate sperm, so fraternal twins can be 2 boys, 2 girls or 1 boy and 1 girl. Identical twins result from the splitting of a fertilised egg (i.e. after the fusion of the egg and the sperm) and twins must therefore be of the same sex and genetically are identical.

Diagnosis of zygosity (mono or di) cannot generally be made on the basis of the placenta. One placenta does not necessarily mean MZ twins (identical), two placenta do not necessarily mean DZ twins (fraternal).

Watching two or more babies of the same age developing side by side is a very interesting and rewarding experience.

It is quite a challenge for both mother and father to care for two or more babies and perhaps other young children. Careful planning will help you cope with the expected and the unexpected and you will discover the many joys of multiple birth children.

We would like to offer you some useful ideas on the following pages on how to manage your family during pregnancy and following your multiple birth.
Preparations

Birth

Discuss with your doctor his/her and your own ideas on how your multiple birth delivery will be managed and remember that you won’t have to go through two labours to produce two or more babies!

If a Caesarean birth is necessary, your stay in hospital may be longer. Some multiple births are premature so it may mean that one or more of your babies have an extended stay in hospital. You may go home without your babies or with just one of them and then have to visit the hospital daily.

Parents

Discuss what you are going to do and the ways you can share the work load. It is most important that you both take care of your health, maintain a nutritious diet, exercise and for the mother to also have plenty of rest.

Your relationship will undoubtedly undergo changes with your new additions so it is important to keep the lines of communication open and try to make time for each other. Go out together occasionally as a couple, it’s well worth the effort, quite enjoyable and may well be your key to sanity!

Babies

Babies basically need
· Something to eat
· Somewhere to sleep
· Something to wear

Babies’ Room

Have only the bare essentials in the babies’ room. A solid, yet movable change table if it will fit in the room. It can also be used for either bathing or storing extra clothes, equipment, nappies, etc.

Many parents of multiples choose to allow their babies to share a cot for the first few months. However it can be a good idea to have a cot set up for each baby, in case you need to separate them.

Breast or Bottle?

The decision is yours. Plan your feeding place (e.g. babies’ room, lounge room) with pillows to support mother and babies.

Feeding will initially govern your daily pattern and it may seem at first as though you do nothing but feed babies. It is especially time consuming if the babies are slow feeders, or have different feeding patterns. It is often difficult to have as much physical contact as you would like with each baby. You could try to make the ‘after feeding’ time the special time for ‘cuddles’.

While feeding, ensure your other children are in the same room as you are, with the door closed so they can’t come to harm (an ideal time for a story or two!).
Breastfeeding

Don’t think that because you have more than one baby you can’t breastfeed. There are many mothers in the Association who have successfully breast-fed their multiples for well over 12 months.

Besides the usual advantages of protection against a number of illnesses breastfeeding will also save you time and money.

Babies can be fed together or separately, depending on what works best for you and your family. There are several positions in which to place the babies for a feed together, one is to lay the babies’ heads together at the front of the mother with their bodies and legs under their mother’s arms (The “Rugby Hold”). You might find a couple of pillows or a firm cushion useful. For triplets, two babies can be breastfed together while the third either waits his/her turn or is bottle-fed expressed breast milk. You can then rotate at the next feed. To burp a baby, hold him/her over the shoulder.

If you are planning to breastfeed, you might like to attend one of our P&DMBA Breastfeeding Multiples Workshops, which are facilitated by a lactation consultant, where you will receive a copy of our Breastfeeding Multiples booklet. Details can be found in your newsletter.

Bottle Feeding

Bottle feeds can be made at any time during a 24 hour period, however, storage in a refrigerator is essential. Never give babies formula that is not of the stated strength. Bottles should be washed in warm soapy water and air dried. As with breastfeeding, babies can be bottle-fed together or separately. Supervision of bottle feeding is imperative as ‘prop’ feeding is very dangerous.

Equipment

Don’t rush out and buy! Speak to other parents of multiples about the different types of equipment before making your decision. Consider buying secondhand. The Association newsletter’s monthly Classified page is a great place to source equipment in twos or threes. A visit to one of the coffee groups can be a valuable source of information. You may prefer to hire or borrow equipment for the babies.

Sometimes small babies will settle better if placed together, so you might choose for them to share a bassinette or cot in the early weeks. You can find helpful information on how to sleep your multiples safely on the Sids and Kids WA website www.sidsandkidswa.org.au.

When it comes to pram selection, choose wisely because you will be lifting it in and out of your car often and need to fit through small doorways.
**Babies’ Clothing**

Buy as few as possible. Approximately one and a half times the amount required for a single baby is sufficient. Consider season - summer rompers are wasted in winter! People are also extremely generous with gifts around the birth of children and you may wish to ‘take stock’ of what you need when you return home from hospital.

**Nappies**

Cloth or disposable, the choice is yours. If using disposable nappies you can stockpile them when they are on special to save money. Most stores will exchange sizes if you save the receipts.

If using cloth nappies, you will need about two dozen per baby. Modern cloth nappies can be machine washed and do not need to be soaked. When you wash your nappies, it is important to use a warm wash with detergent and let them line dry if possible to use the sun’s UV rays to kill any bacteria. Occasionally an anti-bacterial rinse and nappy sanitiser wash should be done.

Change your babies before feeds, unless soiled during feeding. Less handling after feeding often helps babies to settle. It is important to change the babies regularly, and to make sure their bottoms are cleaned at every nappy change, even if they are just wet, not soiled.

**Sleep**

In the first few weeks after birth, babies sleep much of the day and night. Most wake two or three times during the night for feeds. By three months, many babies will have settled into a pattern of longer times awake during the day, and longer sleep times (perhaps 4 – 5 hours) at night. Most will still be waking during the night for feeds.

**Bathing**

Only one bath is necessary as you can only bath one baby at a time. Depending on weather, bathing can be cut down to every second day. You might like to bath one baby one day and the other the next. Be sure to keep face, hands and bottoms clean at all times. If someone is there to help, they can dry and dress the first baby whilst you bath the second etc. Some babies settle a lot easier if they first have their bath and then a feed.

**Travelling**

Child car restraints are manufactured for babies and children and fit into the space of one car seat. They are required by law to be used in all cars for children aged from birth to 7 years. All restraints must be fitted into a lap/sash seatbelt and into a special anchor point in the car. More info about child restraints can be found at www.kidsafewa.com.au. Keep a babies bag packed in readiness for outings. Repack when you return home. Carry spare nappies in the car at all times.
Safety

Examine your home, you may need to install cupboard locks etc, particularly if you have other young children. Make sure they can’t come to any harm when you are busy. An extra precaution may be to take the phone off the hook and make sure the doors are locked while you are feeding the babies.

Cleaning

Put away all items that clutter the house. Clean less frequently or room by room. Remember, you and the family are the important issue for now, not the state of the house! Reduce tasks as much as possible.

Cooking

Keep meals simple. Try to prepare ahead of time, this helps reduce the rush at night. A slow cooker, or frozen meals can save time and energy. The occasional meal brought home is great. Collect menus for healthy local takeaways. It is very important to make sure you eat regular healthy meals.

Washing

Do this any time. There will always be lots of it. Late afternoons is a good time, then it is ready to be hung out the next morning. The best time to fold washing might be when you are having a ‘cuppa’ with someone who just ‘dropped in’. Save ironing time by hanging shirts on the line on coat hangers.

Shopping

Make use of home delivery services, the internet, kind neighbours and friends. Accept ALL offers of help.

Visitors

Well meaning visitors can upset the household routine. Sometimes it is wise to consider some restrictions. A sign hung on the front door when you are sleeping will discourage people from dropping by when it is inconvenient. You can’t always stop what you are doing, so encourage visitors to assist you. Most will be happy to help.
You will wonder how you will get the time to rest, but you must, even for half an hour, while the babies are sleeping. Don’t be tempted to do ‘just one more thing’. Ease off after dinner and spend this time with your partner and family. Try to have someone mind the children occasionally. A break from routine is very refreshing. Be sure to do some post-natal exercises. If you can’t continue your favourite sport, try taking a daily walk. If you are feeling down, dress yourself and your babies for an outing and all go for a walk. Have as much help as possible. It is often wise to get dressed and have a ‘cuppa’ before you start your day, and something to eat as well, as it may be a long morning before you get the opportunity to do this.

Father

Fathers of multiples play a very special role. You often have to juggle your time between work and home. You too, must find time to put your feet up. Help out as much as possible with your multiple birth family, but also try to make sure you and your partner have some time alone together.

Siblings

The other children, be it one or more, will need special attention because of the interest multiple birth children attract, and the time involved in caring for them. Always include them and try to continue their favourite times with you (e.g. story time). Encourage older children to help, it makes them feel important.

Finally…

It is not unusual for parents of multiple birth children to become very tired. ‘There just never seem to be enough hours in the day’. So, don’t be afraid to ask for help. It is not intended that you will continue this way of life forever. Gradually you will settle into a pattern of life that suits you and your family.

Take time to enjoy your children. Take plenty of photographs as your babies will grow quickly and these early days will pass by in a blur. No matter how many children you have, remember that they are each separate individuals and each one needs special attention. We hope you will find that your multiple birth children are not ‘double or triple trouble’ but ‘twice or thrice as nice’!
Australian Multiple Birth Association

Most multiple birth associations in Australia belong to the national organisation AMBA, which provides a national newsletter on multiple birth issues and allows communication and the exchange of ideas between these groups. AMBA's Annual Convention is held at various venues across Australia and allows members to participate in the Association. Western Australia has representation on the AMBA Board www.amba.org.au

Australian Twin Registry

The Australian Twin Registry is a not-for-profit organisation which facilitates and supports medical and scientific studies that involve the participation of multiple birth children and or their relatives. Twins and multiples of all types, of any age and in any state of health, are welcome to join the Australian Twin Registry. To register, or find out more, please call Freecall 1800 037 021 or register online at www.twins.org.au

Australian Breastfeeding Association

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is a not-for-profit organisation interested in the promotion and protection of breastfeeding. ABA was founded with the primary aim of giving mother-to-mother support to breastfeeding women. They facilitate the breastfeeding helpline 1800 MUM 2 MUM (1800 686 2 686) which is staffed by trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and also hire out breast pumps and related equipment. www.breastfeeding.asn.au

From the Heart WA

From the Heart WA (formerly Post-Natal Depression Support Association) is a volunteer run organisation providing support, understanding and information to women, partners and families who are affected by stress and depression related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the addition of a new child (or children!) to the family. They run support groups and telephone counselling service for parents PANDA Helpline 1300 726 306 www.fromtheheartwa.org.au

Community Midwifery WA

CMWA offers pregnancy and childbirth information and referral services; community-based pre and postnatal workshops; and a current and comprehensive library on childbirth related topics. When offering postnatal support services such as breastfeeding support they maintain a philosophy of supporting all women’s choices. Ring 9430 6882 for an appointment or advice Mon-Thur 9-4. www.cmwa.net.au

Red Cross Family Support

The Red Cross provides a family support service that is available to some multiple birth families. Family support offers respite and practical assistance by placing a trained volunteer into your home to give you a helping hand for approx 4 hours per week. If you would like more information please phone 9225 1946 or send an email to wafamilysupport@redcross.org.au.
Wanslea

Wanslea is a not-for-profit, non-government agency providing services to children and families in Western Australia. In-Home Care is a flexible option which offers quality childcare in the child’s own home. Care is provided by an approved carer who will endeavour to fit in with your family’s special circumstances. In-Home Care may be for you if you don’t have access to other childcare services, or if your children’s needs cannot be met by existing services. In-Home Care is available through Wanslea in the following areas: Perth metropolitan, Peel (Mandurah and surrounding region), Great Southern (Albany and surrounding region), Kalgoorlie. Visit www.wanslea.asn.au for more information or call (08) 9245 2441 during business hours.