

Multiples and Speech and Language Development

People often say that, "Twins talk late, "All twins are like that", or, "All twins have a special language". Research from around the world suggests that while the majority of twins develop language skills appropriately, the consensus in the literature seems to be that being a twin does in fact make a child more prone to language delays and disorders due to several biological and social factors. Furthermore, most studies show twins catching up to their singleton peers on standardised language tests during early childhood".

So why is it that more twins have speech and language problems than single children?

Caroline Bowen a Speech Pathologist notes on her website, "This is possibly because twins are frequently premature or low birth weight babies, and their parents may have less time to attend to them individually and to help them develop verbal skills".

So, what is late talking? Research suggests that by the age of two a child should be saying at least 20 words and usually up around the 100 word mark.

Children should also be starting to join two words together (e.g. "more drink"). At two, it's okay if a child's talking is not clear and easily understood by everyone.

What about "Twin talk". Caroline Bowen states that "Recent research in Australia and overseas suggests that twin language is most often seen in twins with immature or disordered language".

A British study showed that twin language is higher (around 50%) in twins with speech and language difficulties than for twins with normal language (11%).

Speech and language delay is a strong predictor of reading and spelling problems at school so it's important to get help as quickly as possible. While some children will catch up spontaneously, many have difficulty.

So what can parents do?

- When possible, find/make times to listen and talk to one child at a time.
Take one child to the shop while the other child/children stay home with the other parent or a carer.
- Don't let one twin speak for both
- Encourage each child to wait for the other to finish speaking
- If concerned take their child/children to see a speech pathologist for an assessment.

Speech pathologists can provide ideas and suggestions, monitor development or provide therapy if needed.

TMBG PARENT SUPPORT

Parenting multiples certainly has its challenges and the TMBG Committee realise this.

We are currently endeavouring to revisit our parent support systems to ensure help and advice is readily available to our members when needed.

This is available for Mums and/or Dads.

The **PARENT SUPPORT** works in 2 main ways:

BUDDY SYSTEM

This is for parent/s who would like support from another member with older multiples. This may be requested at any time. e.g.; A member may decide they would like a buddy before/ after their multiples are born, or any time after that. You can never underestimate the therapeutic benefits of a phone call whether it is regarding a certain issue or just a chat.

SPECIFIC ISSUES OR QUESTIONS

Members may have parenting issues/ questions (big or small) that they would like advice on. Between the committee and all other members the range of experiences is vast. I'm sure we'll find someone to help with any specific issues or difficulties you are facing with your multiples.

If you wish to be involved in the buddy system (and haven't noted this on your membership form) or would like advice from us don't hesitate to call and I'll do my best to sort something out for you!

Sharon 5447122 (evenings are best) or see me at playgroup

Need help?

