



Encouraging multiple-birth children to make individual decisions helps them to become strong, self-assured, independent adults. Whether they make the same or a different decision from their co-multiple(s) is irrelevant; the important thing is to encourage each child to make autonomous choices.

01 ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL CHOICE FROM A YOUNG AGE.

In early childhood, toddlers might choose what snack they want to eat, what shirt to wear or what story to read. Preschoolers can dress themselves and make more choices about games and activities each day.

At school age, children can choose what after-school sport or musical activity they would like to try, what kind of lunch to pack and what chores to help with. Eventually they can discuss whether they would like to be in the same classroom with their sibling(s) or their own classes.

In higher grades there will be opportunities to choose musical instruments, clubs and sports activities, perhaps what high school to apply to and what courses to take.

For young adults there will be more choices of post-secondary education, work opportunities, careers, first apartments and roommates, travel, relationships and marriages. Learning to make good choices and be content with the consequences is an important life skill that takes practice from a young age.

02 CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES DAILY.

Encourage separate experiences from a young age. Talk to each baby individually when the opportunity arises during nappy changes, bath times, feedings or play. Take turns playing or reading with each child and listening to their stories. Take turns bringing just one child on an errand while the other stays at home with the other parent or a carer. Partner children with a parent or older sibling to do chores or help in the kitchen, so they are not always together with their co-multiple(s). Invite a friend over for each child so they can have separate play dates in your home, and eventually visit friends' or family members' homes separately.

Children must be recognised as individuals. Introduce each multiple child by name and parents/carers can suggest ways to tell them apart using cues from appearance, hair or clothing choices. Teach the children to say their names and to correct anyone who calls them by the wrong name. No-one should call the children "the twins" or "the triplets", but should always use their names.

Take photos of each child individually as well as together. Collect some of their photos and artwork in separate scrapbooks.

Give the children their own clothes and their own toys. Set up separate places to keep personal things that are not shared. Of course many toys and games will be shared by everyone in the family, but children need to have some belongings of their very own. Colour coding or stickers may be used to help the children identify their own belongings. Encourage friends and family to give individual birthday cards and gifts, considering each child's preferences. Sing "Happy Birthday" separately for each child.

Formed in 1974, the Australian Multiple Birth Association is the only national support organisation for multiple-birth families and individuals in Australia.

AMBA is a not-for-profit organisation consisting of multiple birth families to whom we provide support, resources and education from other families sharing the same unique journey. AMBA is active in supporting families, increasing awareness of the unique needs of multiple birth families, improving the resources made available to them and producing and distributing literature on issues relating to multiples.

www.amba.org.au
www.facebook.com/australianmultiplebirthorganisation

MBAW
 Multiple Birth Awareness Week
BORN A MULTIPLE, ALSO AN INDIVIDUAL

12-19 MARCH 2017