

National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT:

BOY/GIRL TWIN STUDY

RESEARCHER:

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PURPOSE: The purposes of the study were to describe the twin relationship, define differences in growth and development, and identify parenting issues specific to boy/girl twins.

METHOD: The Boy/Girl Twin Survey was distributed to members of NOMOTC in March 1986. A total of 119 surveys were completed and included in the data analysis.

Most mothers (96%) described their opposite sex twin as having a close or very close relationship. Only 4% felt that their twins were not close. Of those who had other siblings (90 mothers), 54% felt that their twins were closer to each other than to their other siblings.

Fifty-eight percent identified that there was one twin who was more dominant, or a leader. Most often this happened in the toddler phase, followed by school (28%). A few sets (7%) had a leader in the teen years.

Half of the children (50%) compared themselves with their twin in areas of school grades, sports or other achievements. Fifty-eight percent felt that their twins were competitive, while 38% saw their twins as not competitive at all. Only 4% felt their twins were very competitive.

Seventy percent had little difficulty separating from their twin. Of the 30% who did have difficulty, it occurred almost exclusively in the toddler phase.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported that their twins had been physically aggressive with each other at some time, most often in the toddler age (68%), followed by school (23%), and teens (4%).

Ninety-three percent of the mothers reported that their twins help and support each other. Seventy percent of the respondents reported that the girl "mothers" her brother, and 51% reported that the boy (parents/cares for) the girl.

Forty-three percent of the twins have a combination of their own set of friends and mutual friends, while 37% have their own friends, and 20% have mainly a mutual set of friends.

In comparing the development of different skills for the boy and girl twins, the researchers found that based on the mothers surveyed, girls were more likely to be first in becoming toilet trained, in developing fine motor skills, in developing speech skills, and in learning to read. Boys were more likely to be first in developing gross motor skills. However, for all types of skills, results indicated that twins of either sex might develop the skills first, or that both could develop a skill at the same time.

Mothers were asked if they felt that the constant interaction with their opposite sex twins had affected either child's gender identity. Almost all mothers (91%) felt that it had not. A majority of twins (84%) had been together in school at some point, usually in nursery school or grammar school, fewer in junior high or high school. Most often placement together was due to limited number of available classes, although about one-third of the time it was due to parents choice. Most twins had also shared a bedroom, although most had separate rooms by age 6 (95%).

The researchers concluded that almost three-fourths of the mothers surveyed felt that as parents of boy/girl twins they faced different issues than parents of same sex twins. They state that the biggest challenge in rearing boy/girl twins is dealing with the difference in developmental levels between the boy and girl.

The majority of parents in this study felt it was easier to raise a boy/girl pair. There was less competition, comparison and identity problems. But raising this type of twins is not totally free of difficulties, but it can be stated that if each child is treated and loved for their own special qualities and talents they will grow to be well-adjusted adults.

Suggestions for Parents of Boy/Girl Twins

1. Let them do their own thing regarding interests and talents.
 Raise them as individuals.
2. Don't compare achievements.
3. Expect them to develop at different growth rates. They each have their own special genetic time clocks.
4. Help them to realize their special and precious bond of twinship.
5. Let them make their own choices, with parental guidance during the early years.
6. Don't let them depend on one another. Each child should know they are special without the other.
7. Let them discover the differences in their sexuality. Don't separate them too early (i.e. baths, sleeping arrangements).
 Help them feel comfortable about their differences.
8. Love them for their own specialness. Enjoy each day you have with them and RELAX!
