

National

Organization of

Mothers

Of

Twins

Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT: COMPETITIVENESS AMONG MULTIPLES

RESEARCHER:

NOMOTC

DATE:

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of competitiveness among multiple siblings.

METHOD: A questionnaire was printed in *MOTC's Notebook* and a National Mailing. This survey was to be filled out by mothers with multiples between the ages of birth to 18 years.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This survey was completed by 299 mothers of multiples. 247 had multiples between the ages of birth to 5 years, and the remaining 52 had multiples between the ages of 6 to 18 year. Part I of the survey was answered by mothers with multiples between the ages of birth to 5 years. Part II was completed by mothers with multiples of school age, from 6 to 18 years. Part III was answered by everyone.

RESULTS:

Part I (birth to 5 years)

1. The ages of the multiples represented were: 1-6 months (10); 6-12 months (27); 1-3 years (166); and 4-5 years (11). The twin types of these multiples were: identical girls (26); identical boys (39); fraternal girls (42); fraternal boys (53); boy/girl (66); unknown boys and girls (16); and higher order multiples (6).
2. 44% of the mothers said their multiples were about average in their competitiveness; 43% said they were mildly competitive; 8% said they were not at all competitive; and 5% said they were very competitive. The main things they competed for were: toys (84%) and parental attention (9%).
3. The multiples showed competitiveness by: biting, hair pulling, and hitting (48%); tattle-telling (28%); and crying (15%). In 8 families, one of the multiples had seriously hurt the other (i.e. needing stitches, etc.)
4. The competition seemed to develop between multiples at about age: 0-6 months (14%); 6-12 months (40%); 1-3 years (43%); and 4-5 years (4%).
5. 52% of the mothers said that they bought the multiples the same toys because of the competitiveness, but 15% said they bought similar toys for reasons other than competitiveness.

Part II (6-18 years)

1. The ages of the multiples represented were: 6-8 years (69%); 9-12 years (21%); 13-15 years (8%); and 16-18 years (2%). The twin types of these multiples were identical girls (10%); identical boys (19%); fraternal girls (23%); fraternal boys (21%); boy/girl (17%); unknown boys and girls (4%); and higher order multiples (6%).

2. 50% of the mothers thought the multiples were about average in their competition; 19% thought they were very competitive; 17% thought they were mildly competitive; 10% thought they were not at all competitive; and 4% thought the multiples were extremely competitive.
3. The competitiveness seemed to appear at age: < 6 years (74%); 6-8 years (19%); and 9-12 years (6%). Of those who were competitive prior to age 6, 54% are about as competitive now while 38% are more competitive now than they were before age 6. The main things they competed for were: parental attention (77%); friends (51%); school grades (49%); athletics (26%); clothes (17%); and bedroom space (13%).
4. The multiples showed competitiveness by: tattle-telling (73%); physically fighting (69%); name calling (62%); crying (33%); withdrawing (10%); and disruptive behavior (10%). In 3 families, one of the multiples had seriously hurt the other.
5. 36% of the multiples always played the same sports; 53% occasionally played the same sports; and 10% never played the same sports. Of those multiples who played the same sport, 67% of the multiples chose to play the same sport; 21% of the parents decided they would play the same sport; and 7% of the time, only one of the multiples wanted to play the same sport.
6. 51% of the multiples nearly always had similar grades; 35% frequently had similar grades; and 4% rarely or never had similar grades. 60% of the multiples sometimes were in the same classroom, while 21% were never in the same classroom. More than half of the multiples competed for grades to some degree.
7. The multiples had mostly the same friends (33%); shared some in common and had some separate (60%); or mostly separate friends (8%).
8. At the present time, 60% of the multiples shared a bedroom. In the past, 98% of the multiples shared a bedroom. Of those who don't share a bedroom, 29% had to be separated because of competitiveness.
9. 44% of the time, one of the multiples takes care of all of their belongings. 37% of the multiples clashed over neatness in their shared bedroom. 43% of the time, one of the multiples was neat, while the other was messy.

Part III

1. 52% of the mothers of multiples said they sometimes became involved in their multiples' competitiveness.
2. When the multiples physically fought, 76% of the moms separated them; 46% yelled at them; 41% asked them to stop (without yelling); 22% tried to reason with them; 10% spanked them or used force; and 8% ignored them. 80% of the moms who intervened did so because they were afraid someone would get hurt. 97% of the multiples held grudges against each other only for minutes, but 3% would hold grudges for hours or days.
3. 37% of the multiples would "gang up" and compete together against others. 71% of the multiples would "stand up" and defend each other against outsiders.
4. 66% of the multiples were more competitive with each other than with siblings, and 74% are more competitive with each other than with friends.
5. Only 6% of the multiples had to be put into separate classrooms because of competitiveness.
6. 45% of the mothers said they rarely or never got to spend time (shop, lunch, etc.) with each multiple separately.
7. 41% of the mothers felt that competition was sometimes a negative factor in the multiples' relationship; 51% thought it was rarely or never a factor; and 7% thought it was frequently a negative factor.
8. When asked when the competitiveness ended, 98% of the moms said it hadn't ended yet!

- 9. 67% of the moms said that the multiples' competitiveness had affected them to some degree. 42% of the moms described themselves as an average competitive person; 29% were mildly competitive; 14% were very competitive; 13% were not competitive at all; and 2% were extremely competitive. The moms tended to compete with: other mothers (best cook, most well-behaved kids, etc.) (45%); fellow employees (44%); other women in general (nicest dresser, thinnest, etc.) (40%); men (5%) and their kids (3%).
- 10. The multiples' father was an average competitive person (35%); very competitive (21%); mildly competitive (20%); not competitive at all (13%); and extremely competitive (10%).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The age at which competition was first noticed was between 6 months and 3 years of age. This competitiveness, mainly over toys at a young age, caused most mothers to buy them the same toys.
- 2. The older multiples competed with each other for school grades, friends, and parental attention, and to a lesser degree for clothes, sports, bedroom space and attention from the opposite sex.
- 3. All multiples are competitive at least part of the time. Being reared together creates a lot of competitive situations--at school, at home, in the sports arena and in many other places.
- 4. The competitiveness of multiples is balanced by their mutual concern and affection for each other. They often act as a team against the world.
- 5. Learning about competition initially in the home may be helpful to multiples later in life in the very competitive world we live in. Multiples should be better able to compete as an individual against others after having been faced from birth with a competitor (Even before they were born, they competed in the womb for space and nourishment!).