

National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.

RESEARCH REPORT #96

SUBJECT:

**Twins and Classroom Placement:
The Decision-Making Process**

RESEARCHER:

Elizabeth Hiller, M. Ed.

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PURPOSE: The purpose of the study was to investigate the parental decision making process of classroom placement for twins while comparing both parents of twins with children not yet enrolled in school (birth-toddlers) and parents of school-age twins (preschool-12th grade). Under this broad topic, the research specifically investigated where parents gather information to make the decision, who tends to be the primary decision maker and satisfaction outcomes of the decision, how parents go about deciding where to place their twins, where they gather information to help them make an informed decision, and who tends to make the final placement decision. In addition, the research examined whether parents feel that they have adequate information to make their decision.

METHOD: The researcher used convenience sampling to obtain access to mothers of twins from birth to school aged. Respondents answered a 66-question survey regarding their demographic information, twin characteristics and the decision-making process for classroom placement. The survey was electronically administered to a variety of participants, including members of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Club, Inc. and a twins organization from Charleston, SC.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Although previous research has provided some information about the preferences of both mothers and academic professionals, there was relatively little known about the decision making process. The current study investigated the following questions: (1) Do parents report that they know where to find information that would help them make an informed decision about placing their twin children in separate or different classroom before they enter school; (2) Did parents with access to sufficient information about twin placement in the classroom choose to separate them or keep them together; (3) Did parents with sufficient access to information regarding the placement of twins in school separate their children more often than parents who reportedly had less access to such information; (4) What percentage of parents seek professional advice to help them make their decision; (5) Are parents who sought advice more satisfied with their decision; (6) Do parents believe that they should be the primary decision maker for school placement decisions when it concerns their twins; (7) When a decision to separate was reached, who was the primary decision maker; (8) Who was the primary decision maker in the families that

were most and least satisfied with their placement decision; (9) What are the defining reasons as to why a parent would be satisfied or dissatisfied with his/her decisions to separate or not separate his/her students in the classroom? The sample consisted of 105 mothers of twins who currently have children enrolled in the school setting, preschool-12th grade, (86 twin sets) or whose children are not yet enrolled in school, prior to school age, (28 twin sets). For the purposes of comparison, the researcher separated the sample into two groups: mothers of twins aged infant to pre-school and mothers of school aged twins.

RESULTS:

Most mothers of twins reported that they had access to helpful information and that they knew where to find information about the factors they should consider before classroom placement. One-third of mothers who had school aged children and already faced the challenge of classroom placement did not feel that they had enough information to do so. When mothers were asked where they might gather information to help them make the best decision about separating or not separating their twins, many reported that the internet was their primary resource. Mothers of twins prior to school aged referenced the internet as the number one resource, followed by friends who had twins or twins organization, with school personnel coming in last. Mothers of school aged twins reported friends or twin organizations as their number one resource, followed by the internet, with school personnel also coming in last as a source of information.

For mothers who reported having adequate access to information on separation, there were little differences between groups regarding whether twins were separated in the classroom or not. When looking at mothers who initially separated their twins and mothers who kept their twins together, then separated them later on, the separated population was much greater than the twins who were kept together, suggesting that mothers with access to information ultimately separated their twins more often. Mothers who did not have access to information separated their twins more often either originally or later on. A majority of all mothers reported they would/did seek advice from professionals about classroom placement, although a greater percentage of mothers of school aged twins reported that they had sought advice, as compared to less than half of mothers of children prior to school aged.

Respondents who either did or did not seek advice about separation were satisfied with the overall decision they made concerning their twins classroom placement, although a higher percentage of mothers who did seek advice reported being satisfied. Most mothers believed they should ultimately decide whether their twins should be separated, while nearly 1/5th of the sample reported they believed their children should ultimately make the decision. Principals and other school personnel were the least reported category for both mothers of twins prior to school aged, and school aged children. When a placement decision was finally reached, most of the sample reported it was ultimately either their decision alone or they had decided with the father, and less than 5% of the sample reported that school principals as the final decision maker. Most respondents were

satisfied with the classroom placement decision they made regardless of who made the decision.

CONCLUSIONS:

The findings of the research suggested that a majority of mothers believe they have access to information they need to help them make a classroom placement decision concerning their twins. The mothers who believed they have access to information cited the internet as the number one source of information and school personnel (principals, school counselors, school psychologists, etc.) as the least cited source for information. The results suggested that mothers are more likely to utilize websites which may contain inaccurate information than to a professional who interacts with their children in the educational setting. Additionally, results suggested that a majority of mothers ultimately end up separating their twins in the classroom.

While a majority of mothers believe they have access to information, the study also assessed the advice seeking behavior of parents. Mothers of school age twins stated that they would seek advice more often than mothers of twins who are not yet enrolled in school. A discrepancy in advice seeking behavior may occur because mothers of younger twins may not have contemplated the challenges that may occur with classroom placement. Additionally, these mothers may be turning to computers in lieu of professional advice. Of those who did choose to seek advice concerning classroom placement, the majority of mothers were satisfied with their decision.

The current study examined the beliefs that parents held concerning who should be the primary decision maker as well as who actually made the final decision for classroom placement. The majority of mothers believed that mothers should be the primary decision maker. The twins were also believed to be important in the decision making process. This belief was validated as mothers reported that parents were actually the primary decision makers. Furthermore, mothers reported satisfaction with their decision when it was made by the mother, as a joint effort between both parents, and conjointly between parents and children. School personnel did not appear to play a very strong role in the decision making process.