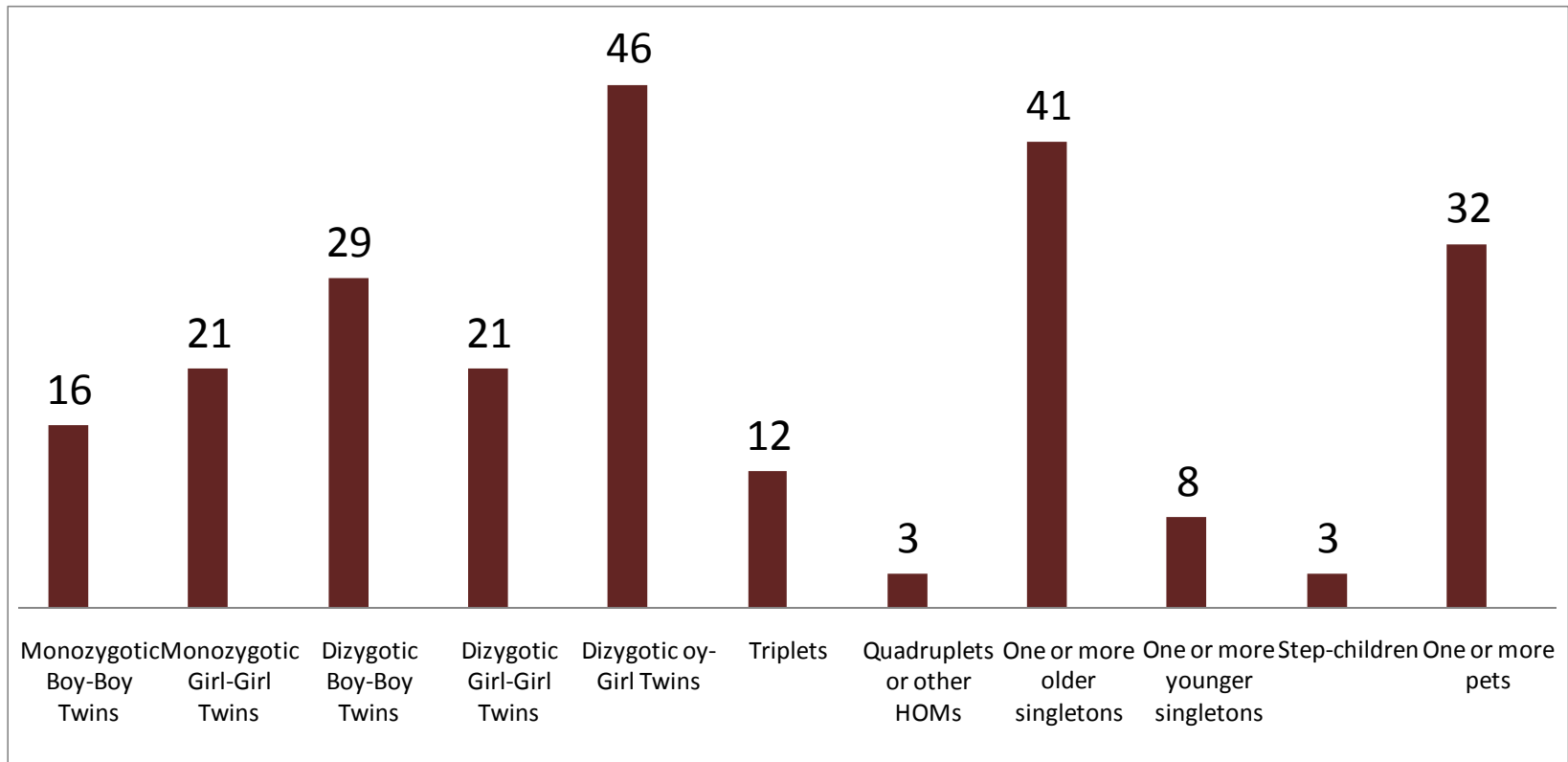


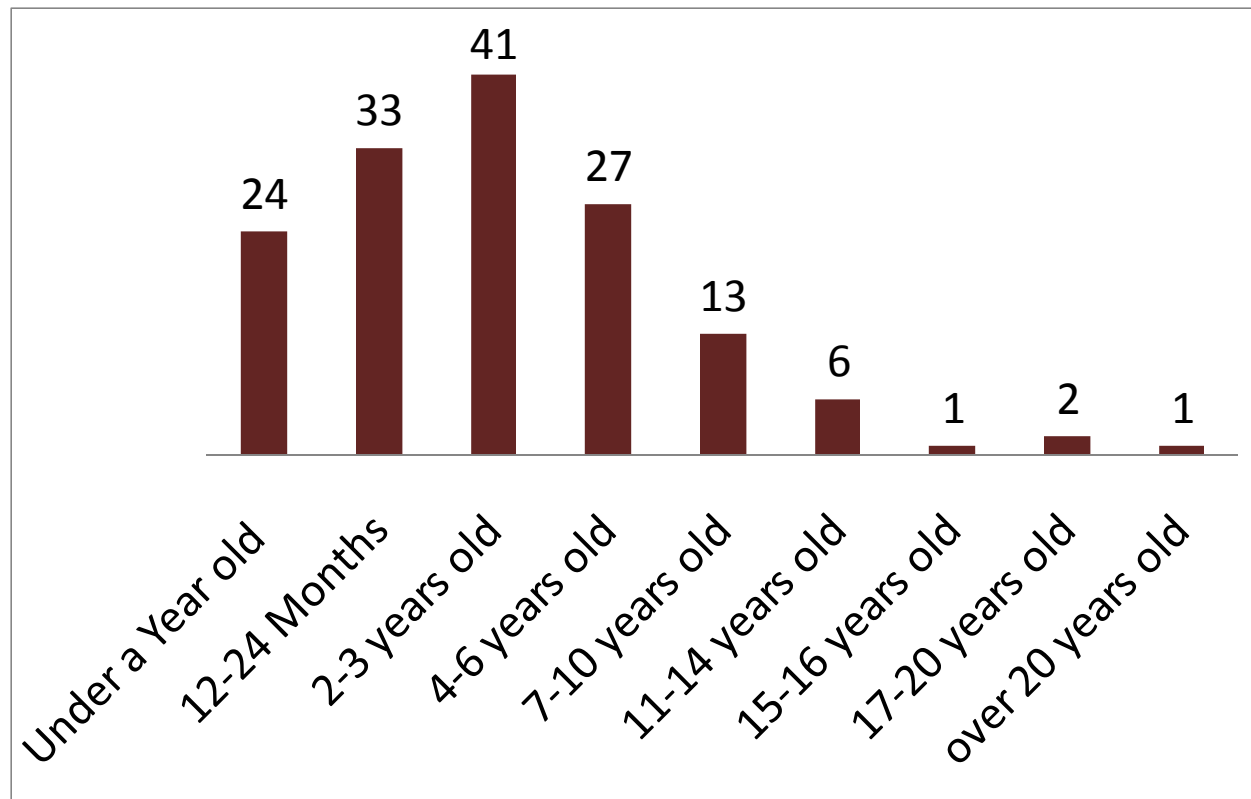
The spousal relationship of multiple-birth parents

A Survey Administered by the
MBC Health & Education Committee

1. I am/we are the parent(s) of .. (please check off all that apply)

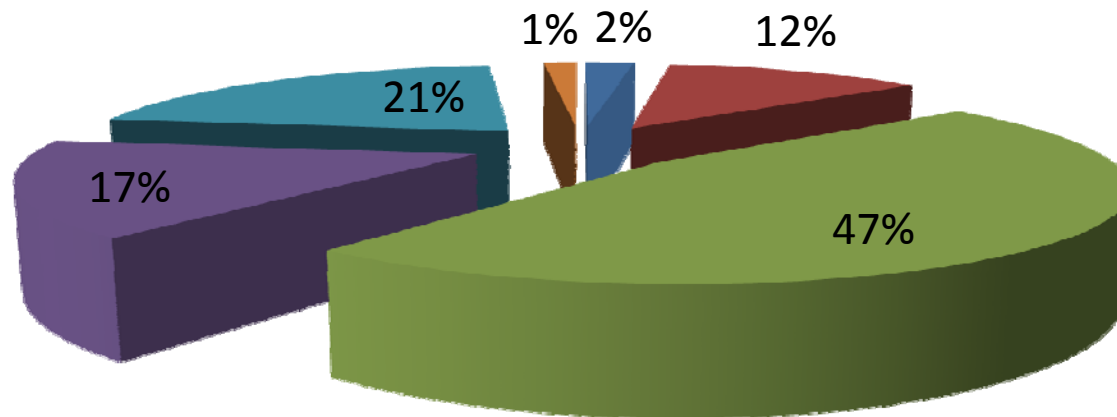


2. At this time, our multiples are ...



3. How long were you a couple before the babies arrived?

- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-10 years
- Longer than 10 years
- Other



4. In your own words, please share some ways that having multiples has positively and negatively impacted your relationship as a couple.

Not enough time for ourselves as individuals,
or as a couple.

We seem to be mommy and daddy and not
really the people we were before the kids.

4. In your own words, please share some ways that having multiples has positively and negatively impacted your relationship as a couple.

It's hard when both of us have had a bad day,
and are looking for the other person to come
home and help out.

And, when this doesn't happen, it gets stressful
between us.

4. In your own words, please share some ways that having multiples has positively and negatively impacted your relationship as a couple.

Less sex. Less free time. And, therefore a tendency to forget to communicate about our individual needs.

Stress due to financial concerns. Less time to spend together as a couple.

4. In your own words, please share some ways that having multiples has positively and negatively impacted your relationship as a couple.

The main negative impact is financially.

We were only planning on having two children, and since we got a “bonus” it changed how we planned our future.

5. As time has gone by, and your multiples have grown, has your spousal relationship improved or not improved?

	Gotten much worse	Somewhat worse	Improved somewhat	Improved drastically	Not applicable	Response Count
By the end of the first year	13.8% (17)	21.1% (26)	48.0% (59)	6.5% (8)	10.6% (13)	123
By the end of the third year	6.0% (6)	9.1% (9)	30.3% (30)	13.1% (13)	41.4% (41)	99
By the end of the fifth year	3.3% (3)	6.5% (6)	8.7% (8)	16.3% (15)	65.2% (60)	92
By the end of the teen years	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (4)	93.8% (76)	81

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

The babies have started sleeping mostly through the night, so we are getting more sleep.

We have learned to corral the babies into play areas, so the rest of the house is staying cleaner, and the laundry has gotten less. This has decreased our workload allowing us more time to spend on our relationship, and more time to sleep.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

The first year that my twins were born, we both found it very stressful, and since my time was extremely stretched he became resentful. We separated for four months as I felt that I already had three little ones and didn't need a fourth.

After counselling and after the kids became older, we learned how to see each others' opinions and decided which way was best for our kids' sake.

By talking to our kids as they get older, it has made it easier for us as a couple to work together as a family.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

We function as a unit, we are careful to check with each other regarding the kids and therefore act as a unified front.

We make more effort to ensure each of us is getting time/break needed for self and own interests. Use our time better.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

We have learned to make time for us. Ever since they were born we have made sure we had our time. Grandparents have also been a big part of that. It is very important to do this, no matter if it is even just a date night. Time away is good.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

We are closer now. Helping each other and supporting one another is second nature.

Where one parent gets tired or loses patience the other parent steps in. We make an excellent team.

Our pride and love for our kids brings us closer every day.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

We fought a lot during the first year .. Lack of sleep and huge responsibilities were hard for both of us.

I, the mom, was resentful that my spouse got to go to work!!!
.. And socialize.

I think I had a bit of post partum [depression] and wanted to be super mom as so many people were watching what I did.

I wanted to do it all. I've gotten over that!

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

By realizing he can't read my mind and that I have to tell him what is bothering me or when I need help.

We respect each other more and I have realized that my way is not the only way to do things. He helps out more and respects my opinion more.

Having the boys makes us deal with our emotions in a more calm manner and we don't "fly off the handle" anymore but think about what we want to say first.

- How has it improved?
- How has it NOT improved?

Our twins are only two months old .. But, in this two months, I have seen my husband take a much more active parental role – he’s had to .. Because we now have four children 5 and under.

But, at the same time, he seems to enjoy it more, and not see midnight feedings and bedtime stories so much as my job, as activities he can take part in.

6. Please indicate whether or not each statement applies to your situation.

	YES	NO	Prefer not to answer	NOT SURE	Response Count
Our multiples were the result of a planned pregnancy	85.7% (108)	12.7% (16)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	126
Our multiple pregnancy was the result of fertility treatment	24.2% (30)	72.6% (90)	1.6% (2)	1.6% (2)	124
The twins (triplets, quads or more) were our FIRST babies	58.4% (73)	41.6% (52)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	125
We already had other children when our multiples were born	42.3% (52)	57.7% (71)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	123
This was our second (or subsequent) pregnancy, but we had lost previous children before or shortly after birth.	20.0% (25)	78.4% (98)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	125
We were planning NOT to have children when we got pregnant with twins (or more)	3.3% (4)	95.0% (114)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (2)	120

7. Please read each statement carefully and check all that apply.



Total responses 124

7. Please read each statement carefully and check all that apply.



Total responses 124

8. Did your class, if you took one, address the impact that multiple-birth babies could have on a relationship? If yes, please give a brief description of what was covered.

Not at all!

It seemed everything that was explained was not going to apply to our situation.

We found prenatal class quite frustrating.

8. Did your class, if you took one, address the impact that multiple-birth babies could have on a relationship? If yes, please give a brief description of what was covered.

Yes.

In particular, the one-day local class had us fill out how long we thought it would take to do certain tasks such as feeding, changing, etc. and then add it up.

There was more to be done than there were hours in the day. However despite this we did not have anywhere to turn for help.

8. Did your class, if you took one, address the impact that multiple-birth babies could have on a relationship? If yes, please give a brief description of what was covered.

The class did not and they did not even address the issue of multiple birth complications, taking care of multiples, nothing whatsoever.

However, they lent us a VHS tape of 1970s, and the mother was the only one taking care of the babies. It was the most discouraging thing we saw.

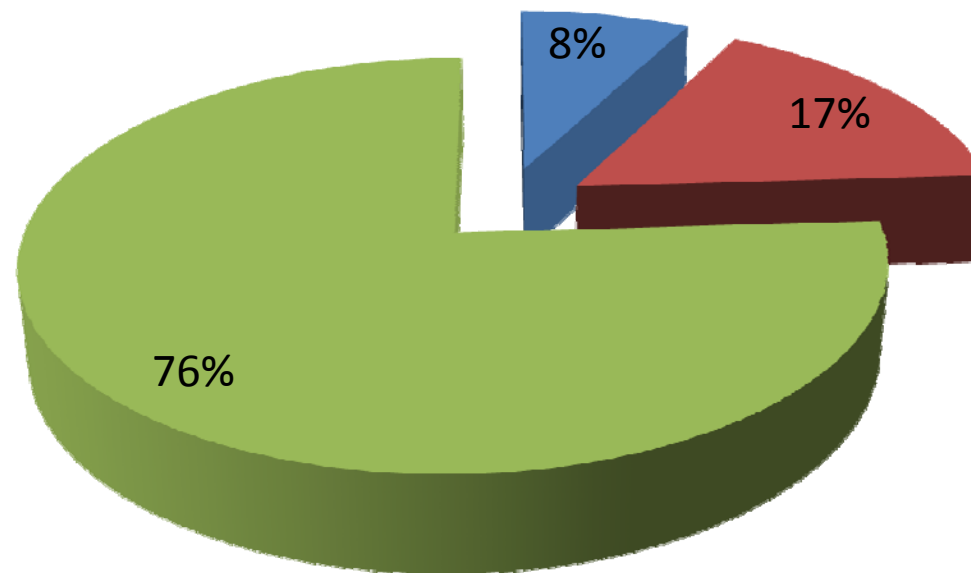
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The class only focused on what to expect when delivering. Nothing about your stay at the hospital – did not get any help whatsoever – left 16 hours after birth.

I think that if we had not had family support systems we would have had so much difficulty.

9. Do you feel that there was enough information available to you and your partner about having multiples and their possible impact on a relationship prior to their birth?

■ YES ■ YES, BUT .. ■ NO



10. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or comments.

I belong to a multiples support group, but did not participate until the babies were 3 months.

I believe it would have been valuable to have had interactions from parents of multiples during my pregnancy and shortly after birth.

10. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or comments.

We feel for the most part that marriage is fragile and adding children to your lives can be a very happy but stressful experience.

A good line of communication and understanding that men and women stress over different things will help make raising multiples a little easier.

10. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or comments.

You can't get through having multiples without being a team in every sense.

Both partners need to be equally involved and equally responsible; and both partners need to allow the other partner to be equally responsible.

This is how we survived.

10. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or comments.

I think that if your relationship is strong, having multiples can make it stronger.

You share an amazing experience and if you can see past the mountain of laundry and utter exhaustion, it is a really neat experience individually and as a couple.

But, if there are problems, the impact of multiples can be overwhelming.

10. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or comments.

If you can get through the first 2-4 years of a multiple-birth relationship, then your marriage will most likely improve. Those who cannot survive, may not have survived whether there were multiples or not, one would never know.

But, I am sure there are a lot more challenges facing couples with multiples, they have to be strong and supportive to each other, knowing that one day (like the terrible twos) this too shall pass! They will grow up and once again you will be alone as a couple.