

Twinning Through Adoption

by Kimberly Simpson

Two babies - twins or not??

When David and I married in October 1987, we agreed to have an equal number of birth and adopted children. When I was seven months pregnant in April of 1996, a baby boy became available for adoption; his birth mother wanted us to raise him. We decided to adopt him since we both felt we could handle twins. We named him Kevin; he was seven weeks old when we brought him home. For five weeks, Kevin was an only child. On May 19, 1996, our daughter Denise was born. Now we have two children less than three months apart in age. Were we crazy? How do we do it? What is happening between the kids? Is it just like twins? These are all questions we have been asked or that we contemplate ourselves.

David and I started pursuing parenthood after having been married for eight years, having finished graduate school, established careers and bought a home. We were ready to dedicate ourselves to children. That dedication is the first thing needed to raise two children (of any age), but especially two so close in age. Next is the fact we are a team. The care of the children is shared by us almost equally. Since I work outside our home only part-time, I do spend more time with our bundles of joy. However, Daddy is ready to play and feed and change when he gets home from work.

Being with our children is pure joy. I believe one of the reasons for this is the fact they act a lot like twins. They were not together in the womb, but have been together every minute

since Denise's birth. They absolutely love each other. They talk and laugh together. I have no idea what they are saying, but they do. Most mornings they awaken within minutes of each other. When I carry Kevin into Denise's room to get her, they smile at each other and stretch out their arms for a hug and kiss - not from me, but from each other.

Are they twins? This is the question most frequently asked by the outside world. My answer is, Yes and No. I belong to a twins club. The experiences I have with my babies are very much like the experiences of the other moms. My children interact with each other in ways very similar to that of "real twins." Because they are so young and so close in age, we experience their samenesses more powerfully than we do their differences. As they grow and increasingly become the unique individuals they are meant to be, we expect we will encounter more of their differences. No matter how much we know about Kevin's genetic heritage, we will always know more about Denise's because we share it. As they grow, they will probably look less and less alike and Denise will share more of our physical traits and tendencies. We will need to be conscious of how that will affect both Kevin and Denise and talk with them about it as things come along. No matter how much they continue to enjoy each other's company, we know our challenge will be to help each of them find their own strengths and talents and feel secure as the separate beings they are, as well as being a brother and sister who share some of the special connections of twins.