



TEDS - environment

TEDS Environment Study NEWSLETTER

October 2003

Dear family,

This is our newsletter for 2003 and we have many exciting things to report in this edition. We will be detailing some findings from the study so far as well as giving you an update on our plans for the next stage. There is a new drawing competition with some great prizes and we look forward to receiving your entries. We also have details of findings from our research papers about the effects of mother's warmth on low birth weight children and about the effects on twins placed in separate classrooms.

We really appreciate your continuing participation in the study and hope that this newsletter provides some useful information for you and helps us to keep in touch.

*With best wishes,
The TEDS-Environment Team*

Future plans

We have now visited you at home at least twice and are busy analysing the data collected and writing research papers. We hope to visit you again next year when the twins are ten or eleven.

It is important that when we come to visit you we have your correct details; we have enclosed a change of address card with this newsletter. If any of your details do change please fill in the card and return it to us. You can also call us on the freephone number: 0800 317 029 or email us at: Teds-Environment@iop.kcl.ac.uk.

Visit our website at:
www.Teds-Environment.com

Feel free to contact us anytime.

The topics of some of the research papers being written are:

Effects of smoking during pregnancy
Does smacking lead to naughty behaviour?

Does hyperactivity have genetic origins?

Why do identical twins have different personalities?

We will keep you up to date with any future findings.

Birthday cards

We hope that all the twins who have already had their birthday have received their cards. Do let us know if you move house so that we can ensure that birthday cards reach your twins.

Research Findings from TEDS-Environment

The Benefit of a Mother's Love for Low Birth Weight Children

Background to the study

Over the past two decades, advances in neonatal care have improved the survival of low birth weight babies. Twins and other multiple births are more likely to be born prematurely and have low birth weights. Children born weighing 4.5 pounds or less are usually described as having low birth weight.

Low birth weight babies can experience all kinds of problems including learning and behavioural difficulties such as hyperactivity, inattention and low intelligence. Some researchers believe that long-term problems in low birth weight children occur as a result of harm in the brain at the neonatal stage.

What was our research question?

Not all children born with low birth weight experience learning and behavioural problems. So why do some children develop difficulties and others don't? Could the child's experiences in life play a part in whether they develop learning or behavioural difficulties? In this study, we looked at whether the level of warmth a mother can show influences her low birth weight child's learning and behavioural difficulties.

What did we find?

We found that low birth weight children do experience more learning and behavioural difficulties.

However, we did also find that the level of warmth a mother shows could prevent behavioural problems in low birth weight children. High levels of a mother's warmth protect low birth weight children from poor behaviour such as inattention and hyperactivity. Mothers who provide high levels of warmth provide a more supportive and caring environment for low birth weight babies.

Why are the findings important?

This study highlights the significance of a mother's warmth in a child's development. A mother's warmth not only feels good to a child, but can also prevent behavioural problems. It also shows the need for methods of teaching mothers who are unable to show their child warmth, to interact with their children more positively, which would benefit the child's behaviour.

The report will be published in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. It also paves the way for future research; other factors, such as a father's warmth will be investigated.



Research Findings from Teds- Environment

Classroom Separation – Effects on Twins

Background to the Study

When twins start school, parents often ask whether or not classroom separation will have a positive effect on their school achievement, friendships and emotional development. Some schools leave the decision of classroom separation up to the parent/s but other schools have policies about whether the twins are separated or not and the parent/s cannot negotiate. There has been little or no research into the effects of classroom separation on twins, so current school policies are not based on research findings. Without any research evidence it is difficult for teachers and parents to make the best decision for the children.

What was our research question?

In this study, we were interested to find out the good and bad effects of classroom separation.

What did we find?

On the whole, classroom separation did not have much good or bad influence. We did discover that some identical twins who were separated at age 5 showed more internalising problems such as loneliness, worrying, crying and nervousness. These problems were still there at age 7.

The finding that identical twins are likely to experience some problems at ages 5 and 7 after separation could be because they experience a closer relationship than non-identical twins and therefore find separation more stressful.



Why are the findings important?

In Britain, Australia and the US, some schools have policies that say twins have to be put into separate classrooms at school but the findings in this research suggest that separating twins does not benefit either child's development and, at worst, may cause slight harm.

Although these findings are significant, not all separated identical twins had problems and many were not bothered by separation at all. Different children have different experiences, and decisions about classroom separation should be made on an individual basis by the parent/s and teacher. This research should help that decision and should discourage school policies which say all twins should be separated or all twins should be kept together. In the future it will be important to find out whether problems arising from classroom separation continue into later childhood and even adolescence.

Copies of this report can be obtained by contacting us.

Some record-breaking twins!

World's tallest male twins: Michael and James Lanier, United States, 7-feet, 6-inches each

World's tallest female twins: Heather and Heidi Burge, United States, 6-feet, 5-inches each

Longest living twins (current): Laura and Lillian Boucher (born in Michigan USA, on June 7, 1900)

Lena and Thilda Vangstad (born in Minnesota, USA on July 29, 1901)

Gerturde Eddy & Dorothy McMahan (born Nova Scotia, Canada on Nov. 13, 1901)

Hilda Edwards & Mabel Jeans (born in England on Dec. 16, 1901)

Sarah Selina Jeanmougin & Ellen Isabella Robertson (born in Saskatchewan, Canada on May 29, 1902)

Margaret White & Martha Taylor (born in Kansas City, USA on March 5, 1903)

Joaquin and Gerardo Esteban Garcia (born in Cuba in March, 1903)

Your Comments

If you have any comments about our newsletter or any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact us! We love hearing from you.

OUR Contact details

TEDS- Environment
Department box number p080
FREEPOST LON7567
London SE5 8YZ
Freephone: 0800 317 029

*******Website*******

www.Teds-Environment.com

Visit the Kid's Zone, find out about our team and keep an eye out for the winning entries of the drawing competition below.

*******E-mail*******

Teds-Environment@iop.kcl.ac.uk

Future newsletters

Look out for our next newsletter where we will be reporting our findings on bullying in school.

Competition

Teds Environment is launching a new competition for all our twins to take part in. We would like you to draw your favourite character from your favourite book. Whether you like the mystical worlds of Harry Potter or Mildred Hubble, or you prefer Pooh Bear in the Hundred Acre Wood, we would love to see them. The best will receive a selection of Bloomsbury children's books and a family ticket* to any UGC cinema. Runners-up will also receive free family tickets. Send in your entry with your name and address on the back to the freepost address above. The winning entries will be published in the next newsletter, so get drawing! The closing date will be 31st January.



* Family ticket is based on two adults and two children

