



Multiple Births
Naissances multiples
C A N A D A

National Multiple Births Awareness Day!

May 28th



www.multiplebirthscanada.org

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*Supporting
Multiple Births
Together*

Is Your Community Ready To Celebrate?

Why celebrate National Multiple Births Awareness Day?

Established in 2005 by Multiple Births Canada, National Multiple Births Awareness Day is designated as the day for raising national awareness of the unique issues faced by multiple-birth individuals and their families. The date of May 28th is symbolic as it is the birth date of the Dionne quintuplets, who helped Canadians to better understand the challenges faced by Canada's multiple-birth community.

What is the theme for 2010?

The 2010 National Multiple Births Awareness Day theme is: "Canada's EI Parental Leave must reflect the needs of multiple-birth infants."

What is the intent of Parental Leave?

Parental leave is designed to provide either or both parents with time to spend with their newborns. For the mother, parental leave provisions commonly stipulate that the leave be taken immediately after maternity leave, thereby extending the total leave period. For the second parent, parental leave provisions allow time off to care for the newborn. During their parental leave, eligible employees may receive 35 weeks of Employment Insurance parental benefits.

Why should the EI Parental Leave provide additional leave time for parents of multiple births?

The positive outcome of additional leave time for parents of multiples is:

- **Mothers have better support during pregnancy complications** - with a second parent at home, mothers have more time to rest and recover.
- **Parents can better focus on short or long term health problems of the infants** - with both parents home, or more weeks of leave, parents have more time to care for infants in hospital and at home, to attend many medical appointments or therapies, or to grieve the loss of one or more babies.
- **Primary caregiver is better equipped to handle physical and emotional stress** - with a second parent at home, or more weeks with of leave, the parents can take shifts more easily and be less sleep deprived and less exhausted. They will have more time to breastfeed, to bond with each baby individually, and to spend one-on-one time with each baby attending to their needs and promoting healthy development.
- **Parents can focus on their babies, not their financial challenges** - with longer paid parental leave, families will have less urgency to return to work, more financial resources to meet the increased costs of two or more babies, and more flexibility to work when it best meets their needs. Also there will be less need to seek daycare for the infants, which is difficult to find and extremely expensive for twins or more.
- **Babies will have better (quality and quantity) bonding time with parents** - parents will be provided with more opportunities to interact individually with their children, accomplishing the strong best start outcome desired from Canada's EI Parental Leave benefit.



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What can Chapters and multiple-birth groups do?

First, decide how much time, energy and financial resources you can allocate to your event. Plan accordingly. While the most popular event has been family gatherings, some communities hold the event in conjunction with their semi-annual clothing sales. Other ideas that will work:

- *Letter Writing Campaign:* We encourage all supporters to use the template letters designed to send a message to Ottawa regarding multiple-birth family needs and the reasons why "Canada's EI Parental Leave must reflect the needs of multiple-birth infants."
- *Ottawa Rally:* Make it a family event on Friday, May 28th! Start with the rally—together we will impress our Members of Parliament that multiple-birth families have unique needs. Then, spend the weekend visiting our nation's museums and historical buildings.
- *Local Rallies:* If you cannot attend the national event, build upon the national effort by hosting a 30-minute rally in front of the office of your local Member of Parliament. Your rally should be scheduled to accommodate your members for the week of May 24-28.
- *Multiples Panel:* This is a great opportunity for multiple-birth individuals to address the questions of others. This can be a private event or include an invitation to politicians and media. An outline of how to organize a Multiple Births Panel is available for download from the MBC website.
- *Poster and Pamphlet Campaign:* Multiple Births Canada has bilingual posters and pamphlets to assist Chapters with outreach campaigns in their communities. Free copies are available by faxing the Business Office at 1-705-429-9809, emailing office@multiplebirthscanada.org or calling toll free 1-866-228-8824.
- *Family Gathering:* This can be in someone's backyard, the local zoo, or at the park. It can be a simple picnic, or can include other elements such as kid's games, media interviews, a scavenger hunt or other fun family activity. A template for a celebration cake, which can also be used as a t-shirt transfer, is available for download from the MBC website.

When do you get started?

START NOW! Talk to your members, then register your intentions online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/O6FLWKB> - this will allow MBC to send you personalized messages for your group. MBC will use this database to list the advocacy and celebration initiatives being held cross Canada on the Awareness Page.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS! MBC will support registered groups with guidance and communication materials.

TAKE LOTS OF PICTURES! Once you have approval to share them, email them to office@multiplebirthscanada.org and MBC will post them on our website!

**If your event receives
exceptional media support,
consider nominating that media outlet
for this year's Media Award!**