

'Real Experience' - Using Real Nappies on Twins, by Zoe Emerson, Real Nappy Project Volunteer

When I found out that I was pregnant for a third time I was delighted - I'd get to reuse the nappies that I had used with Georgia and save even more money with number three! It was great to know that I had everything that I needed and this baby would be "free".

The scan revealed otherwise. I was carrying twins! I had had my suspicions and being a twin myself I always knew there was a good chance that I would have twins too. Now everything had to be doubled – two cots, a new bigger pram, more clothes, more feeds and of course more nappy changing!

I was still determined that I would be using real nappies so I needed to figure out how to fit it all in. Georgia was only two and 4 months when the twins came along so she was still in real nappies herself. The twins were a good size, Travis weighed in at 7lb 5oz and Olivia at 6lb 7oz, so there was no thought of them being far too wee to at least give it a try.

I opted for a laundry service to see us through the early days when I had three in nappies and was getting my head round two babies and all the lack of sleep that entailed. The laundry service no longer exists, but we actually only used it for a few months as I found it hugely expensive – and to be honest having to store a weeks worth of clean then dirty nappies wasn't easy or pleasant!

Four months later Georgia was successfully toilet trained and so then we just had to deal with nappies for the twins. I bought about twelve terry squares to add to my collection of shaped nappies and got to work.

In the early days I was washing nappies twice a day but after a few months that became once a day. The twins are now almost two and a half so we are able to wash once very second day.

As my twins are a boy and a girl I have tended to stick to unisex folds or styles of shaped nappies – I had had visions of them each having their own nappies specially folded for them, but Travis could often be found sporting a pink wrap and Olivia a nappy with most of the padding to the front!! My preferred nappies to use are the Tots Bots classic shape, where I fold the flap down the length of the nappy, or stuffables where there is no internal booster to worry about.

Days out with more than one child in real nappies does usually mean a bigger bag to store them in. For these occasions stuffables or terry squares are great as they take up a little bit less room. We did occasionally get nappy rash but we were able to overcome this and did not feel the need to look for an alternative to real nappies.

It is no harder using real nappies with twins than with a single child, though it does probably require more organisation – with Georgia if I missed a wash it wasn't the end of the world, but with the twins I have always had a strict washing system. I also have a designated drying space so that the nappies are treated as very separate to the rest of the household laundry.

Having twins requires so much more organisation than a single child anyway, so to add one further chore into your schedule isn't really that hard. I have always found it easier to have set "changing times" (despite not being a Gina Ford type mother) and to change them both whether they need it or not, as it is harder to "wing it" with two.

I think that any extra work created by using real nappies for one, two or even three babies is worth it for the short space of time that children are in nappies compared to the environmental and financial burden of using disposables.