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School Placement of Multiples - Separation or Not?

A Movement Toward a Worldwide Policy for Annual Assessment

NEWS

November 1, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO) has announced the theme of this year's Multiple Births Awareness Week (November 4-11) - *"School placement of multiples, and issues regarding whether separation or not is best."* ICOMBO utilizes Multiple Birth Awareness Week to address specific issues in the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples** and to stimulate international discussion and action on a specific theme.

ICOMBO was formed at the 1980 International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS) Congress, held in Jerusalem. For the past 30+ years its membership has been raising awareness of the unique needs of multiple – birth infants, children, adults and their families promoting their health, education and welfare.

One of the challenges faced by parents of twins, triplets and more is to foster the unique development of each child while encouraging the unique bond between their children. This concern also applies to teachers with multiples in their classrooms; however the challenge within the school may be complicated by preconceived opinions of educators, the number of students in the school, and the number of twins, triplets or more involved.

ICOMBO believes decisions about classroom placement of multiples should be made annually, on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the parents of the children concerned and the children themselves. Just as each child is unique, each set of multiples is unique. Some multiples thrive in separate classes; others in the same class. Similarly, what works for a given set of multiples one year might not work the next year. Therefore, ICOMBO believes that blanket policies on this issue – either for separate or same-class placement – are inappropriate.

"It is important to assess each child's development and needs from year to year. To have a firm policy of separation or not denies the individual growth of each child and how their bond may or may not affect their ability to concentrate and learn. This is why ICOMBO is asking our members to devote the next two years to reaching out to decision-makers and promoting the resources we have available to help when making these crucial decisions."

Monica Rankin, B.Sc., Grad Dip.Ed., ICOMBO Chair

"The most recent research on the placement of multiples in school states that the best policy is a flexible policy, where the needs of each child are evaluated prior to making the placement decision. It is also important to re-evaluate the needs of same-age siblings if their educational needs are not being met, and not waiting until the following academic year."

John Mascazine, Ph.D., Assoc Professor of Education, Ohio Dominican University

QUICK FACTS

- Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples - <http://icombo.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Declaration-of-Rights-2010.pdf>
- ICOMBO membership includes representation from over 30 countries - <http://icombo.org/links/>
- ICOMBO endorses school assessment tools posted on this site - <http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/>
- References and recommended reading on this subject - <http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/research/r2.cfm>

MEDIA CONTACTS

Monica Rankin
ICOMBO Chair
chair@icombo.org

Gail Moore
International Multiple Births Awareness Week Co-Chair
awareness@icombo.org