

News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

Supports the International Council of Multiple Births Organizations'

International Multiple Birth Awareness Week and

Movement Towards a Worldwide Policy:

Annual Assessment for School Placement: to Separate or Not?

Franklin Tenn, November 1, 2012 — The National Organization of Mothers of Multiples Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) is joining the International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations in support of a movement toward a worldwide policy for the annual assessment of multiples for school placement during International Multiple Birth Awareness Week being held November 4-11, 2012. The mission of the multi-national membership of the International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO) (Congress website), with representation of 30+ countries, is to promote awareness of the unique needs of multiple-birth infants, children, and adults. To address specific issues, ICOMBO utilizes Multiple Birth Awareness Week to draw attention to benchmarks from the Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples <a href="http://icombo.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Declaration-of-Rights-2010.pdf">http://icombo.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Declaration-of-Rights-2010.pdf</a> to stimulate international discussion and action on a specific theme. For 2012, ICOMBO is bringing awareness to school placement of multiples, and issues regarding whether separation is best for the children or not.

NOMOTC past president and advisor as well as Co-chair of ICOMBO Terri Gillis said, "NOMOTC is proud to support this international organization whose soul focus is the betterment of living for those born as multiples. Being a multiple is such a unique experience from many standpoints and we know the discussion concerning whether or not to separate multiples can be complex, but what is at the heart of the decision is what will serve as the best learning platform for the children, so that they achieve their potential."

One of the challenges faced by parents of twins, triplets and higher order multiples 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.

Monica Rankin, ICOMBO Chair states, "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. ICOMBO (and NOMOTC as a member organization of 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. 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 generalized policies on this issue – either for separate or same-class placement – are inappropriate.

ICOMBO encourages all countries to adopt policies that allow for annual assessment of what is best for each year of a student's school life. To follow a specific practice within an educational setting without regard to the multiple bond or the individualization process does not allow for decisions that are in the best interest of each child within the multiple birth set.

In the United States, it is the practice of the public school system to automatically separate multiples. However, by law in 12 states (twinslaw.com), parents can request that they be put together. Two states have resolutions with parental input, while other states have bills that are sponsored but have not yet become law. Concerning are the other states, which have bills that are not sponsored and those states where no action is being taken.

Pam Krell, NOMOTC President, conveys that "This is a perfect opportunity for our organizations to come together to draw awareness to this critical issue of doing what's best for each child within the multiple birth set to maximize his or her learning potential."

For international tools and information pertaining to the school placement of multiples, please consult the following websites\*:

- Model relationships: http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/wmm/wmm5cc.cfm,
- Speech and Language Checklist: <a href="http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/preschool/p2b.cfm">http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/preschool/p2b.cfm</a>
- School readiness: http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/preschool/p3a.cfm,
- Checklist for parent/teacher discussion of twin separation: <a href="http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/school/sy2.cfm">http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/school/sy2.cfm</a>
- School Policy: http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/school/sy7a.cfm
- ADHD checklist: http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/sn/sn4d.cfm

For information regarding specific laws within the United States, please see Twinslaw.com.

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## **About NOMOTC:**

National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (www.nomotc.org), the premiere organization for parents of multiples is a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1960 and is comprised of local clubs and individual members dedicated to supporting families of multiple birth children (twins, triplets and higher-order multiples) through education, research, and networking. NOMOTC is headquartered in Franklin, Tenn. and serves nearly 25,000 members in more than 300 clubs in 44 states across the country. For more information contact Kim Ozark, NOMOTC Executive Vice President executivevp@nomotc.org. NOMOTC Executive Office: nomotc@aol.com. Phone 248-231-4480.

## About ICOMBO:

The International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations formerly (COMBO) (<a href="https://icombo.org">http://icombo.org</a>) was formed in 1980 at the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS) Congress held in Jerusalem. After much collaboration and restructuring, COMBO was ratified as a working group of ISTS at the 1998 Congress in Helsinki. In 2010, COMBO formally changed their name to become the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO). The mission of ICOMBO is to raise awareness of the unique needs of multiple birth infants, children, adults and their families promoting their health, education and welfare. ICOMBO is comprised of 40+ organizations in 27countries.

These tools have been developed and shared through the generosity of the following professionals:

David A. Hay: Retired Professor of Psychology; Curtin University, Western Australia. Former national patron of the Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA)

Pat Preedy: Adjunct Professor at Curtin University, Chief Education Officer for GEMS UK, Executive Principal of GEMS Sherfield School, UK; Director of Training and Research GEMS, UK; Education Research Consultant for the Twins and Multiple Births Association (Tamba)

John Mascazine: Associate Professor of Education at Ohio Dominican University

Neilson Martin: Curtin Research Fellow and Research Manager at Indigenous Psychological Services Nancy Segal: B.A. degree in psychology (with distinction) and English literature from Boston University (1973), and M.A. (1974) and Ph.D. (1982) degrees in Social Sciences and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Chicago

ICOMBO thanks these professionals for their continued involvement in promoting awareness of the unique needs of multiple-birth infants, children, and adults.

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