

ROMP
Pinnacle Explorations

CHOMP
Mother's Day brunch

SHOP
So Suzette

MAY 2019

Seattle's Child

YOUR GUIDE TO A
KID-FRIENDLY CITY



the
Baby
issue

Twins get together at
a weekly meeting of
Seattle Families of Multiples

FOCUS ON
HEALTHY FAMILIES

HOW TO SPOT DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

**Things
we love**

Meditation playdates

On a meditation playdate, children ages 0 to 3 explore simple toys and interact with others in the room while



parents are guided through a 25-minute meditation.

Seattle mom Ela Compton created **ParentsPause**, a mindfulness practice to help parents be silently present and open to whatever unfolds within the sometimes chaotic environment that young children can create.

She explains that this unique setting offers "a very different perspective than meditating on our own in some peaceful, secluded spot" by providing parents with real-life scenarios and "an opportunity to pause in the middle of the storm and ... consciously respond, rather than just react, in a compassionate and constructive way."

Seattle Mindfulness Center (6306 Phinney Ave. N.), every Wednesday in May, 10 to 10:45 am. \$15 drop-in or five-class punch card for \$70. Free introductory class available. parentspause.com

— Erika Almanza Brown



Grab a diaper bag

Easy baby outings

You could stare at your beautiful new baby for hours. Or you could get out of the house! Catch a Mommy Matinee every Friday at the Historic Admiral Theater in West Seattle (crying welcome).

Stroll around the Woodland Park Zoo. Feed your baby in the luxurious Nordstrom women's lounge at Pacific Place. Snuggle at library story time. Visit the peaceful Nordic Heritage Museum. People-watch on a public park bench. Refuel at a local coffee shop and check out our complete list of baby outings at seattleschild.com.

» Baby

Support for new parents

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A PEMS group in Maple Leaf shares the highs and lows of parenting multiples.

Support, multiplied

Seattle Families of Multiples helps new parents face the exponential challenges of life with twins

by JILLIAN O'CONNOR / photos by JOSHUA HUSTON



When it comes to babies, doubling your fun can also mean doubling the workload. And the poop diapers. And the feedings. And the wakings. And the crying. And, yeah, it can double the

parental crying, too.

To address the unique needs of families facing the challenge of two or more babies arriving at once, Seattle Families of Multiples has developed the eight-week program PEMS (Providing

Early Multiples Support), closely modeled on Seattle's extremely popular PEPS (Program for Early Parent Support) groups.

At weekly meetings, PEMS parents, who by necessity are often drawn from all over the metro area, can unload about all the challenges they've met in the past week: the highs and lows, as well as the funny observations.

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«Baby

PEMS CONTINUED

“One of the women in my PEMS group put it the best way: With a singleton pregnancy you have two parents per new baby. In a twin pregnancy and at birth you’ve got one parent per one baby, so basically you’re outnumbered,” said Emily Oliver of West Seattle, laughing.

“I think that probably scheduling is one of the biggest differences with a twin pregnancy and birth, especially as a first-time momma,” said Oliver, who participated in a PEMS group with her infant boy and girl twins this year.

“Like, how do you breastfeed two babies? How do you leave the house with two babies? You know you can’t just strap one on and walk out the door. There’s a lot of logistics involved,” noted Elizabeth Knaster, a PEMS facilitator who lives in Maple Leaf.

PEMS facilitator Lisa

Dermer sees the program as an invaluable resource. Many twins and other multiples are born premature, which gives this set of new parents additional challenges. Multiple pregnancies are also automatically considered high-risk, noted Dermer, a Ballard resident. “I think what’s really hard is that our expectations as parents of multiples often really have to shift,” she said, explaining that twin moms can often have issues with breast-milk supply, too.

Twin mom Emily Hawkins of Madison Valley found PEMS very helpful this year, and raves about the Seattle Parents of Multiples resources as well, including the “preemie closet,” where members can borrow from the group’s collection of teeny clothes, which can be hard to find as well as expensive.

“It’s a really nice, supportive way of being able to dress your little babies, and do it in a way that’s economical,” explained Hawkins.

“I think it’s very important to build a village,” said coordinator and twin parent Marloes Koning, who oversees PEMS. “To connect with people, to have people that can support you, whether it be through PEPS or PEMS, as long as you reach out to people.”

“That’s very difficult for most moms — and maybe even dads as well: to reach out and ask for help.”

► Learn more about PEMS at seattlemultiples.org/pems



Where parents of color don’t have to hold back

New parent programming expands at local nonprofit Families of Color Seattle

by CARLA BELL /
photo by JOSHUA HUSTON



“For many moms of color, this is the first time they’re in an environment where other

women and mothers of color are centered and regarded as an authority,” says Christine Tang, director of programs for Families of Color Seattle, a local, women-led nonprofit organization working to create community for families impacted by systemic oppression. This is meaningful for women of color who participate and their children who observe.

FOCS (pronounced FOH-ks) offers groups for parents of newborns and waddlers, for single moms and working moms, for dads and transracial adoptees — 13 affinity groups in all. FOCS group leaders have lived experience specific to the groups they lead.

Beginning this summer, FOCS will launch several new groups: Black Moms and Parents, Children with Disabilities/Special Needs, and Queer Trans (QT-FOCS); followed by Single Moms of Color and Native Moms/Parents in the fall. These eight-week programs are funded by King

County’s Best Starts for Kids, so parents and children can participate for free.

For families in need, the BSK funding will transportation costs to and from group gatherings. FOCS is building a resource toolkit to aid parents who register for the Children with Disabilities/Special Needs group.

Before joining FOCS last year, Tang was on the board of directors. Before that, she was a parent educator. But she’s always been a woman of Nigerian-Romanian descent, now a mother to multiracial boys. She’s in the unique position of having both contributed to and benefited from the work of the organization, and its goal to support every intersection within families of color.

“We talk about nursing, weaning, childcare, and all the ‘regular’ new parent stuff. We share resource ideas and we exchange experiences,” she says, “but it’s through our lens of racial equity and cultural heritage, through our discussions about race, being in multiracial families, struggling with how to maintain while bringing up children in the U.S., and

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