1 March 2022

[INSERT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS HERE]

Dear [Name],

The Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA) will be celebrating Multiple Birth Awareness Week (MBAW) from 20 to 27 March 2022. This annual, national campaign highlights an issue of importance to the multiple birth community. Through advocacy, education and community engagement, AMBA aims to increase positive health outcomes, awareness and equality for families of twins, triplets and more.

This year's theme, *Educating the Educators*, gives AMBA the opportunity to put the spotlight on the unique needs of multiples and their parents, in the educational context. We want to ensure that families, medical and educational professionals have access to information on how to best support and cater for the specific needs of multiples, across the lifespan.

Multiples specific education is required from the moment parents discover there is more than one. Families should have access to high quality education that addresses and prepares them for the additional medical, social and emotional challenges they may face. *Educating the Educators* is an opportunity to engage with a range of professionals to develop best practice when working with multiples and their families.

Some of the unique considerations for families and professionals to consider include:

- Classroom placement - whether to split them or keep them together - is one of the biggest dilemmas faced by parents of multiples. As part of MBAW, AMBA has released a position statement on classroom placement.

Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA)
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- School readiness - with 65% of twins and 95% of higher order multiples born prematurely and higher rates of developmental delays, the decision about when multiples start school, can be more difficult.
- Being treated as individuals - ensuring professionals and the general community acknowledge multiples as separate entities and avoid comparisons or labels.
- Fostering individuality - encouraging and supporting multiples to develop their own unique personalities, friendships and interests.
- Respecting the bond of multiples - understanding and fostering the unique bond that twins, triplets or more have and supporting them through transitions that involve separation.
- Additional family stressors - awareness of the increased rates of mental health issues and financial strain amongst multiple birth families.

AMBA's local clubs act as a peer support network for parents of multiples to share their lived experience. Clubs also offer a range of educational opportunities for parents, from expectant parent nights to school readiness sessions. You can find your local club here.

The Australian Multiple Birth Association offers a number of resources to support families and professionals, including live and on demand webinars on a range of relevant topics.

We invite you to participate in our special MBAW week webinars to gain an insight into the unique needs of multiples. These webinars can also be shared with the wider community. Our webinar schedule includes:

- Monday 21 March 2022, 8pm AEDT
  Monica Rankin, Chairperson of International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO)
  Multiples in School: To keep together or to separate?
- Wednesday 23 March 2022, 8.30pm AEDT
  Professor Mark P. Umstad AM, Director of Maternity Services at the Royal Women's Hospital
  Improving Outcomes in Multiple Birth Pregnancies
- Saturday 2 April 2022, 4.30pm AEDT
  Dr Katie Wood Associate Professor, Psychology at La Trobe University will share her expertise in specific clinical twin psychology

Webinar registration is via www.amba.org.au/families/resources/webinar-series. We will also be opening up our webinar library free of charge for the entirety of Multiple Birth Awareness Week.

Additionally, we are encouraging schools who have multiples in their community to Put on Purple, on a day of their choosing, to raise awareness of this special week. We'd be delighted if you participated in this initiative and shared any photos of your community wearing purple during MBAW.

Please reach out if we can assist you with further information. We look forward to your participation in MBAW and continued support of multiple birth families.

Warm regards,

Larissa Jordan
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