

“When your first child is born, in the excitement you momentarily lose your mind and buy one of everything. In every picture, the child is looking pristine, the colours are vivid and the white clothes are so sharp it’s like looking directly at the sun. The second child is wearing the very same clothes four years later, except now there are some unsightly marks and it looks like it’s lined the dog’s basket in between uses.”



Seeing life from a dad’s perspective!

Dads ROCK!

In the first of a new series Paul Bunker, TV, radio presenter and dad of two living in Portsmouth shares his fatherly experiences!

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It must be tough going through life being constantly compared to the ‘Golden child’. As the elder of two boys, it’s been brilliant. My brother would have no problem in whinging about the fact that I’ve had it easy and I’m starting to sympathise with him now I have two children. Second child syndrome is a genuine issue.

Jack is five months old and he’s been born into a family that absolutely dotes on his five year old sister. It would be extremely cruel and unfair to say I have a favourite child, but if you walked into our house now, every room has almost been turned into a shrine to Molly. If she’s not framed in canvas in a professionally taken cheeky photo, there’s a piece of pasta inspired pre-school art pinned to a wall or a fridge. We do have pictures of Jack, they’re just small and hidden under some telephone directory’s somewhere.

It’s not quite that bad, but I do feel terrible about the fact that we have thousands of pictures of our first born and a lot less of number two. Molly’s first smile, her first tooth, her first step, her kaleidoscopic nappies, stroking a warthog at Marwell – you name it, we’ve got a photo of it. Poor old Jack, he’d have to cartwheel in the front door, dressed as Superman, breathing fire before someone would suggest getting a snap.

He’s going to get to 18 and question if he actually grew up with us due to

the lack of evidence.

Another major qualm that has scarred the second born are hand-me-downs. When your first child is born, in the excitement you momentarily lose your mind and buy one of everything. In every picture, the child is looking pristine, the colours are vivid and the white clothes are so sharp it’s like looking directly at the sun. The second child is wearing the very same clothes four years later, except now there are some unsightly marks and it looks like it’s lined the dog’s basket in between uses.

It’s even more of an issue if you’ve got an older sibling of the opposite sex. I went to school with a lad who had 3 older sisters, his blue school shirts were all actually blouses. His mum assured him nobody would tell the difference and apart from the lace around the collar and little flowers embroidered on the pocket he looked the same as the rest of us.

Going through school as the younger brother or sister delivers its own Herculean challenges. If the older child is a caring, sharing genius, you’ll always be compared and teacher’s memories will increase exponentially year on year. Before long they’ll be chortling with their cardigans on, about how brilliant they were and referring to the time your freckly, pigtailed sister invented the concept of the Hadron Collider whilst decorating a toilet roll tube with rice. If your older brother or sister left the legacy of being a tearaway, just give

up. You’ve got more chance of parting the sea than convincing them you’re two different people.

The well documented ‘Battle of the Bedrooms’, has plagued mankind since we were gibbering away in our caves. Now, I’ve never designed a house, but if I did it would make perfect sense to have 2 bedrooms of equal size. That way, neither child is getting the preferential treatment nor do parents have constantly make peace deals to address the imbalance. I grew up in a three bedroom house, where I had a palatial room, large enough for a snooker table and a giant bed. My little and considerably weaker brother had to make do with a bedroom that consisted of an area smaller than our airing cupboard. Fun for him when he was four, not so funny when he was 15 and six foot three.

Of course there are few serious upsides to being the second/youngest child. You will always be the baby of the family; your parents have been shocked and upset by the shenanigans of the older child, you can learn by their mistakes and where they’ve been caught out for wrong-doings, you can find new ways of not getting rumbled. Only a fool makes the same mistake twice.

Jack will, in time, relish the fact that he’s the baby brother. In the year 2023, when Molly is 17 and has her friends over, I’ve got a feeling 13 year Jack will have a very wry smile on his cheeky little face. ✨