



With 7 children, including 5 one-year-olds, time is a precious commodity! Because of that, I am always on the lookout for ways to save time. Here are my top ten time-saving tips:

1 No Sorting Laundry---I used to take everyone's laundry, put it together, sort it into whites, lights, darks and denim, wash each load and then re-sort things back into the appropriate person's basket. I have recently discovered that in today's color-fast world, all that sorting is unnecessary. Now I wash each persons clothes separately (except the babies—I still wash all of their clothes together). I wash everything on cold---it all comes out looking great and no time is spent sorting!

2 Pizza Cutters and Kitchen Shears---these are my favorite kitchen tools. They quickly cut everything from chicken to grilled cheese sandwiches into bite size pieces. Even when I just had singletons, I always carried an extra pair of kitchen shears in my diaper bag.

3 Schedule Chores---I have a specific day for doing laundry, changing sheets, giving the babies a bath, etc. I find that if I schedule things, I plan for it and it gets done. If I don't schedule it, it is too easy to put off.

4 Toy Bins for Each Day---The babies have way too many toys with a million parts. Instead of letting them play with all the toys every day, I have divided the toys into five different bins. Each day I pull out a new bin of toys for the babies to play with. This saves time because I don't have so many toys to clean up at the end of the day. It is also easier to play with the toys because the pieces are kept together. In addition, the babies don't get tired of seeing the same toys every day.

5 Freezer Sandwiches---Instead of making sandwiches for Riley and Kaiya's lunches each morning, I make several sandwiches all at one time and keep them in the freezer. In the morning when things are rushed, I just grab one and put it in the lunchbox. By lunchtime, the sandwich has thawed and ready to eat. This works great with all kinds of sandwiches: ham and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, etc. With only two school-age children, I only have to make sandwiches about once every other week. I am sure that will all change when the quintuplets go to school!



Back row: Riley, Jayson (Dad), Rachelle (Mom) & Kaiya
Front row: Kaydence, Rustin, Ryder, Kyndall, & Cassidy Wilkinson

6 Pay Bills Automatically---Each of my regular bills (water, phone, internet, electric, gas, TV, cell phone, mortgage, etc.) is set up to be automatically paid each month. Most companies now have a way to easily set this up. All my bills get paid on time without me doing anything, and I don't have to spend money on stamps! For places that don't offer automatic payments (like Riley's piano teacher and Kaiya's dance studio), I use my bank's online bill pay to set up automatic payments.

7 Store Trash Bags in the Bottom of the Trash Can--- I keep a roll of trash bags at the bottom of my trash cans. When the trash needs to be taken out, I don't have to waste time searching for a new liner. When I have my children take out the trash, the roll on the bottom of the can is an extra reminder that they need to put a new liner in the can.

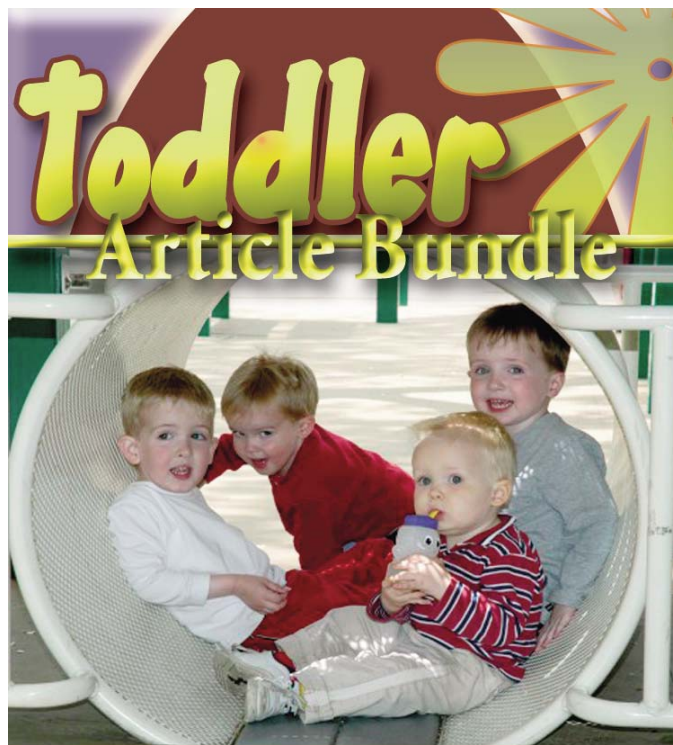
8 Brown Several Pounds of Hamburger and Freeze--- Whenever hamburger goes on sale for a good price, I buy about 10 lbs. Then I brown it all together (usually I do two batches of 5 lbs because of the size of my pot) and divide it into Ziploc freezer bags and toss it in the freezer. When I need it, the meat quickly thaws, and it works great for taco salads, sloppy joes, spaghetti sauce, casseroles, etc.

9 Pre-buy Toys for Birthday Parties---Once children start going to school, it is amazing how many birthday parties they get invited to. If I find a good sale on toys, I will buy several and save them. When a party comes up, I am not forced to go to the store at the last minute and the children still get to pick something they think their friend will like from the stash of toys I have saved.

10 Music---The power of music is amazing! If I am having trouble getting some of the babies to eat their baby food, I just start singing to them, and that usually distracts them enough that they will eat. When I want my older children to get their rooms clean in a hurry, I turn on an energetic song (Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee" works particularly well www.youtube.com/watch?v=y41DykcpgRg.) When several babies are crying and needing my attention all at the same time, I can usually calm them down by singing "The Wheels on the Bus" or some other action song. At my house, *The Wiggles* rank right up there with disposable diapers and microwaves. Without *The Wiggles*, my family would never get dinner!



by Rachele Wilkinson
 Mother to Riley (6/00),
 Kaiya (3/03), Kaydence,
 Cassidy, Rustin, Ryder &
 Kyndall (7/07)



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