I did go once to the twins and multiple births clubs, but found the other children there were quite demanding of Eric and Joe, probably because they were still babies and the others were older. I felt I needed to 'normalise' some of Eric and Joe's contact with other children and their families. I may go again, but it's not for us at the moment.

Summary

Eric and Joe are now little thugs (but extremely loveable ones!), who continue to wreak havoc, in other words they are normal toddlers! My older children adore them, and I have arranged respite care with Social Services (you have to push and push for this) for Eric and Joe so we can all have a break now and again. Eric is now walking with a baby walker, and nearly standing alone. Joe is nearly there, but his motor tone isn’t as good as Eric’s in his legs. However, Eric and Joe are beginning to use Makaton (sign language) really well and their comprehension is good for their age, in fact better than my eldest son’s at the same age.

I can truly say that being a parent of twins with Down syndrome is very challenging. Having a child(ren) with special needs means that you have to work that extra bit harder as a parent and sometimes I just want to hide under my duvet for the day and have a rest! My partner left the family last September after we had family therapy. I was furious to be so let down but I still had my children and we’re all now doing really well. In fact I cope better now than before.

I have high hopes for the boys. They’re lucky because they’ll always have each other, and they learn from each other and my older children.

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Online resource for families with twins with Down syndrome:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/multiples-DS/

How often are children with Down syndrome twins?

The likelihood of having non-identical twins runs in families. Women whose mothers, sisters, or aunts have had twins have an increased chance of having non-identical twins. The risk also increases with mother’s age: a woman who gives birth at 37 is four times more likely to have non-identical twins than at age 18. Neither age nor family history seems to affect the incidence of identical twins, which account for about 4 per 1000 births worldwide. These figures only apply to spontaneous, or natural births. Assisted reproduction techniques, particularly ovarian stimulation, increase the risk of twins and multiple births.

Twins with Down syndrome

Twins or multiple births occur at a rate of about 2% in the population of 15,000 babies with Down syndrome recorded on the UK National Down Syndrome Cytogenetic Register. A total of 244 twin pairs are recorded (some prenatally diagnosed), including 29 pairs (11.8%) where both have Down syndrome. Nine sets of triplets are recorded, each with one affected child. In twin pairs where both have Down syndrome they may not be identical (from one egg), as one pair are a boy and a girl. In a small number of cases, the affected pregnancy was assisted using hormones.

These figures indicate that, in a group of 1000 babies with Down syndrome, some 14 or 15 babies will be a twin or a triplet, with their other twins/triplets unaffected, and 2 or 4 babies will be identical twin pairs, both with Down syndrome.

If we consider all births, we estimate that identical twins with Down syndrome occur at the rate of 1 or 2 in a million pregnancies and non-identical twins at the rate of 14/15 in a million. If the likelihood of having a twin or twins with Down syndrome is also linked to a family history of twins, to age or to assisted pregnancies, we presume these factors will play a part in increasing the risk for some individuals.

Source :
National Down Syndrome Cytogenetic Register, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry
http://www.mds.qmw.ac.uk/wolfson/ndscr/#mul