



# TEXAS★SIZED

## Family

Lena and David Carlberg share how they manage their daily routine with 10 children

*Written by Holly Leger | Photography by Sara Isola*





Lena and David Carlberg with their children, Adrian, Annie, Alyssa, Addison, Abigail, Alec, Aidan, Ashton, Adam, and Andrew

“Alyssa, Annie, Aidan, Alec, Andrew, Adam, Ashton, Abigail, Addison, Adrian...” No you’re not listening to a nursery rhyme; that is breakfast roll call at the Carlberg home. Lena Carlberg still finds it hard to believe sometimes. “I didn’t plan it that way,” she laughs. “I wasn’t ever going to have 10 kids.” She and her husband, David, are proud parents of six boys and four girls, ranging in age from 1 to 16 years old.

### Planning A Family

David and Lena met in 1996 while working at the Olive Garden. A couple of years later, they began dating. Soon

both wanted a family, but had slightly opposing views on the matter. Lena’s mother came from a family of seven. Lena and her two brothers have fond memories of being surrounded by their cousins at family gatherings. “I remember crying and begging my mom to have more [kids],” Lena says.

David on the other hand, grew up with the large family Lena wanted so badly. He was the youngest of eight, and had different dreams about starting a family of his own. “I wanted twins - a boy and a girl, and then be done,” David laughs. However, before either of them compromised on the matter, they got a surprise and learned they were pregnant



with a baby girl. In the following 15 years, Lena and David added nine more children to their family. “There’s no explanation,” Lena says. “They just kept coming, and we didn’t want to stop - until now. We are officially done,” she adds, looking at 1-year-old Adrian in her arms.

## Helping Hands

With six children attending three different schools and four children staying at home each day, the Carlbergs follow a tight schedule. Lena and David expect the kids to help along the way. For instance, while Lena takes 13-year-old Annie, who has cerebral palsy, to therapy after school, Alyssa, 16 and Aidan, 11 watch over their younger siblings at home. Alyssa even helps them with their homework. Lena says sometimes they perform tasks like these without even being told to. “They’re actually amazing at helping each other,” she says. And of course, mom and dad put in their share of work - with Lena doing about three loads of laundry a day, and David cooking dinner each night after he returns from work at Inchcape Shipping Services.

*“My favorite thing is without a doubt all the love, all the hugs, and all the laughter.”*

- Lena Carlberg

## The Wolf Pack

Another challenge Lena faces are her sons’ seemingly endless games of wrestling. “I don’t know how to stop that,” she laughs, as David reassures her that it’s probably a universal problem with boys. These four brothers are what Lena likes to call, “the wolf pack,” because they are such close pals.

According to Lena, Ashton, age 4, was recently lost to the wolf pack, too. How did she know? “All the sudden, he says, ‘I don’t like Barney!’” But the wolf packs does more than wrestle and disown Barney. They also take good care of their sister, Annie. Lena says the boys constantly make sure Annie has everything she needs, whether it is a missing piece to a game she’s playing, or a glass of water. “I can hear them talking to her,” Lena shares. “They listen really intently.”

## Hectic But Happy

It is love like that which makes their full house something special. The mess and noise may sometimes be amplified, but then again, so are the holidays and the family fun - like the 12 birthdays they get to celebrate each year. “There’s never a dull moment,” David says. “There’s always something going on.” From being the little girl who once longed for more siblings, to becoming the mother of 10 children, Lena couldn’t be happier with her lot of straight A’s. “My favorite thing is without a doubt all the love, all the hugs, and all the laughter,” she says. “I guess you can say I’m addicted to kids - especially mine.” KM

*HOLLY LEGER loves hearing her father’s stories about growing up as one of 10 in the Kitten family.*

# Meet the 10 Carlberg Kids



**Alyssa, 16**

*Sophomore at Taylor High School  
Likes to read, debate, and volunteer*



**Annie, 13**

*Eighth-grader at McMeans Junior High  
Enjoys playing soccer and loves the movie, Sixteen Candles*



**Aidan, 11**

*Sixth-grader at McMeans Junior High  
Likes playing sports and enjoys hanging out with friends at Starbucks*



**Alec, 9**

*Fourth-grader at Hayes Elementary  
Likes to go outside, jump on the trampoline, and play football with his brother, Adam*



**Andrew, 8**

*Second-grader at Hayes Elementary  
Enjoys jumping on the trampoline and racing - on scooter and on foot*



**Adam, 6**

*Kindergartner at Hayes Elementary  
Likes to play his Xbox*



**Ashton, 4**

*Likes to play with his brother, Andrew*



**Abigail (Abby), 3**

*Enjoys playing with her Dora toys*



**Addison, 2**

*Loves princesses, especially Cinderella*



**Adrian, 1**

*Likes to be held*