

Babywearing 101

An educational handout for health care professionals, childcare providers and parents

What is babywearing?

Babywearing is carrying your baby using a baby carrier. Babies are born with the need for touch and closeness and using baby carriers allows parents and care givers to provide that nurturing touch, but with the convenience of being hands-free.



What are the benefits of babywearing?

- Carried babies cry less
- Helps to calm colicky babies
- Provides baby with comforting touch
- More comfortable than carrying in arms for long periods
- Gives you more mobility when traveling with baby in your daily life
- You can care for older children easier
- Convenient – be hands free!

What are the different baby carrier types?

Ring slings - slings made of a long, wide piece of fabric that is attached to a pair of sturdy rings. Ring slings are adjustable to fit around you and your baby.

Pouches - slings that are similar to ring slings, but do not have rings and are fitted to your physical size.

Mei Tais - Asian-inspired carriers that consist of a rectangular (sometimes square) body and four straps attached - shoulder and waist straps. Mei tais are used as a hip, front and back carrier.

Buckle carriers - soft structured baby carriers inspired by mei tai baby carriers, but with side release buckle closures. They have a main supportive panel, padded shoulder straps and are often used to carry baby on your front or back.

Wraparound – long piece of cloth used for carrying children. These are tied in various tying

methods and can be used to carry your baby on your hips, front and back. Wraparounds with stretch (knit fabric) are generally used as front carriers. Woven (no stretch) wraparounds can be used for all carries.

Babywearing Safety

Babywearing can be as safe as carrying baby in arms. Here are some guidelines for carrying your baby safely in a baby carrier.

- Avoid placing baby in a C-like position, as this can push his chin to his chest and constrict the oxygen intake.
- Airway should be clear and open.
- The safest position for a young baby is tummy-to-tummy and upright. This can be accomplished in wraparounds, ring slings, pouches and mei tais and soft structured carriers.
- Avoid baby carriers in which baby is intended to be placed in the C-like position.
- For infants, the baby carrier should fully support his bottom, back and neck.
- For older babies worn with legs out, the baby carrier should support from the back of his knees to his shoulders.
- Baby should be carried with his bottom at or above your belly button.
- Baby should be visible to you while worn.



Online Resources

www.thebabywearer.com

www.facebook.com/babywearing-safety

www.nurturebabynaturally.com

<http://tinyurl.com/correctpositioning>

<http://babywearinginternational.org>