

API Parenting Support Survey

2009

By Rita Brhel, API

A 2009 online survey by Attachment Parenting International (API) revealed that parents around the world are hungry for support and education in their Attachment Parenting (AP) choices. Results from the survey clarify API's role in providing this support.

This API survey was conducted to gather anecdotal information and feedback from established API supporters. API was pleased to have more than 100 responses from busy parents in the brief timeframe.

The key point disclosed through the survey is that parents want to see API have more of a local presence. Parents very much appreciate all of API's resources, but it is the local peer support that they crave. Moving stories and more in-depth feedback is included in "How has API Helped You" at the end of this summary.

Parents Seek Out Local Peer Support First

According to the responses from the survey, parents tend to seek out support of their parenting approaches in peer relations, particularly with family and friends and especially through API Support Groups.

"Our first was a high-needs baby. I was introduced to Dr. Sears through our Bradley instructor. I read his AP book and found my parenting lifeline. Thankfully, the Twin Cities has a very active AP group. **They are my first 'go to' when we're having problems.**"

If API is unavailable in their local area, parents will attend other gatherings like La Leche League International meetings or a natural parenting group. Whenever possible, face-to-face interactions with like-minded parents are preferred over web-based support or reading material.

"I have a wonderful mom's group that believes in Attachment Parenting. We all give each other support and help out when others are stressed or having a bad day. **I don't need to turn to anybody else but these great women.**"

If there are no free options, some parents will turn to paid professionals to provide the desired peer support.

"I needed emotional support for myself and my daughter when I was experiencing difficult visitation and custody arrangements and **eventually found a clinical psychologist** with extensive experience in attachment and bonding. However, after we moved away and it was too far to continue sessions with her, my primary source of support has been a local API group."

Parents see great value in attending AP support groups and most would not choose to participate in non-AP groups if that was the only option. The purpose of attending parenting groups serves more than a time for socialization, or even support and encouragement – it is a sense of belonging that is not always easily found in a society where attached parents are the minority.

"I don't know what I would do without our group – **it is the only place I am normal.** If you think your group isn't a big deal, try going to a hospital-based group or just spend some time in public where parents routinely do not tend to the needs of their children – it is heartbreaking!"

While parents would rather receive encouragement and help locally, many parents without access to a local API Support Group, especially those who feel resistance from their family and friends, find it online – on forums like the API Forum or social networking sites like Facebook's API group.

Many parents also find validation and education through AP websites, like AttachmentParenting.org or AskDrSears.com, and in books and magazines such as *The Attached Family* and *Mothering*.

"There is not an API Support Group in my area. I believe the closest one is two and a half hours away. I get most of my information from a couple of friends in the 'breastfeeding world,' with the **rest of my information and support coming from reading books and online.**"

Clearly, local parenting groups – API Support Groups, in particular – are vital for attached parents. While many respondents praised their local API resources, others lamented that there wasn't an API Support Group nearby or even within driving distance.

“Honestly, I haven't had any support from anyone. I mostly scour the web for any advice or stories of people going through the same things as me. I've tried joining some groups, but they only have meetings during work hours and I have to work outside of the home unfortunately. It's a pretty lonely existence, but I think it's worth it.”

Some API Support Groups have a variety of ways of reaching out to parents, such as holding a second meeting each month at a different time of the day for working parents, forming a playgroup or book club, and planning special social outings. Parents also find great value in API Support Groups that have their own forums or e-mail listservs, for continued support between meetings.

“I always ask my API listserv first because there are so many wise parents on there. I trust their advice.”

The bottom line, though, is: The real need is simply for more API Support Groups to form, in more communities. There is no mistake that parents will attend local groups, if one is available and held at a time that works with that parent's schedules.

Support Groups and API Leaders are a match

While some parents in the survey said that they found peer counseling from their local API Leader to be helpful, it was those leaders associated with an API Support Group that were most valued. The support group and the leader go hand-in-hand.

- Several respondents requested an API Support Group in their area – specifically:
- Canberra, **Australia**
 - Lethbridge, **Alberta, Canada**
 - Kampula, **Uganda**
 - Blytheville, **Arizona, USA**
 - Riverside and San Jose in **California, USA**
 - Greenwich, **Connecticut, USA**
 - Doral and Egg Harbor Township in **Florida, USA**
 - Council Bluffs, **Iowa, USA**
 - Paducah, **Kentucky, USA**
 - Omaha, **Nebraska, USA**
 - Nassau County, Long Island, **New York, USA**
 - Lorain, **Ohio, USA**
 - Fort Worth and Grapevine in **Texas, USA**
 - Arlington and Culpeper in **Virginia, USA**
 - Pullman, Snohomish, and Sunnyside in **Washington, USA.**

“I considered my API Leader's presence at the Support Group when I rated it. I don't look at her or the group as separate entities.”

“I only had my family until I went to a local API meeting and the leader reached out to me. Then, I had her – and the group – as my support!”

API's Other Resources Especially Important to Parents without a Support Group

With or without an API Support Group, respondents said that the resources provided through API's publications, website, and programs are appreciated in their parenting journey. However, it is those parents without a local source of support that API-disseminated information is crucial.

“When my daughter was first born, a local API group existed and it was so very helpful. Then the API group dissolved. I rely on books and CDs for a great deal of parenting information, but API is still very much a focus for the information I gather.”

“I gain strength and often regain perspective after reading stories from API.”

Attached Parents Want 'Uncommon' Support for Common Concerns

Parents come to API's Support Group and other resources for a variety of childrearing concerns, but by and far, those surveyed ranked coping with and resolving sleep issues as their top need. In order of most troubling to respondents who sought out API support:

1. Sleep
2. Feeding with love and respect, including breastfeeding
3. Discipline
4. Dealing with criticism

5. **Babywearing**
6. **Striving for personal and family balance**
7. Separation anxiety between parent and child
8. Responding with sensitivity, specifically regarding crying
9. Pregnancy and birth
10. Choosing childcare
11. Sibling rivalry (tied with #12)
12. Managing anger in the parent (tied with #11)
13. Schooling decisions.

Additional childrearing concerns included:

- Raising multiples
- Dealing with postpartum depression
- Learning appropriate expectations according to normal child development and how to respond to challenging moments with an Attachment Parenting approach.

While all parents struggle with these childrearing areas at some time, the parents who come to API are specifically seeking an Attachment Parenting approach to these issues – often a perspective they can't find elsewhere.

"I was a nanny for a long time and was taught by parents the traditional parenting styles of crying-it-out, always putting a baby down, bottles with formula, and having a baby in a crib. When I had my own children, there was such a pull where I felt those were the things I should be doing even though my instincts screamed otherwise. I have struggled to learn to follow my instincts by immersing myself in a supportive group and lots of supportive reading."

"Both my children were high-needs babies and nearly wore me out. AP helped me understand their needs and realize my parenting wasn't wrong – in fact, that it was appropriate for their personalities."

While many of the childrearing concerns selected by parents were in regards to infants and toddlers, API is reaching its goal of supporting more parents of older children, evident in that discipline ranks so high in the top parenting issues. And while childcare, siblings, and schooling were quite a bit lower on the list, there were still a considerable number of parents who chose these

issues. It's evident that parents see that API is just as relevant as children grow older as when they were younger.

"I have used API more as my son gets older. It was easier to stay connected when he was younger through extended breastfeeding, babywearing, and cosleeping. Around four or five years old, however, we needed help developing a discipline strategy that keeps us connected. We've also begun thinking about transitioning our son to his own room. The API teleseminars have been helpful."

"I have read many stories and advice from API. It always gives me relief to know that my beliefs aren't wrong. My friends and I don't always agree on the discipline issue, but I know that when I am having a challenging day with my five year old, I can use API for support to help me make it through the day."

Still, among some the misconception that Attachment Parenting is only for parents of infants and toddlers is prevalent. One respondent commented that API's support is no longer valid since her child turned two, so she would have to wait to use all that she learned when she gives birth to her next child. API is aware that this misconception exists, and this comment affirms that API needs to continue to educate parents that Attachment Parenting is for parents of children of all ages.

Attached Parents beyond the API Principles of Parenting

No matter what the childrearing issue, even issues outside of the Eight Principles of Parenting, many parents commented that API is still their major source of education and support.

"Our parents have surprisingly been very critical of our parenting choices, which feel like we are following our natural parental instincts. Outside information has been critical for our family."

"I have nursed my children in a social climate that I have not always found to be conducive to the World Health Organization, and the American Pediatrics Academy, or even La Leche League. API has been where I go to be validated and reassured."

"I find API to be a good resource for everyday parenting advice – e.g., 'How do you get an 18 month old to let you brush their teeth?' – **from people that I know have a similar perspective on raising kids.**"

"API has given me resources to **defend my position against a society that does not agree with me** on many parenting matters."

"I knew my heart was right. I **just needed to see it in writing or hear I wasn't the only one that felt this way.**"

Professionals also find API information helpful in expanding their services to parents. A La Leche League leader said: "My interaction is with breastfeeding mothers, and I have been able to add on more knowledge from API."

What Parents Like about API: Support Groups, Articles, and Forum

What API resources do parents find helpful in dealing with various childrearing issues? As reaffirmed, parents readily seek out support through their local API Support Group.

"Gosh, what haven't I needed support for?! **But I turn to my AP friends first** because they understand my parenting style. They don't just say, 'Just do cry-it-out – it works!' They say, 'Here is a gentle approach I tried.'"

"If it comes up in my life, I share it with my API group. **They are my friends and 'co-workers,' and I respect their opinions and experiences greatly.**"

"**It is wonderful to have a group of people that have similar goals that we do.** When we have problems or can't figure something out, these people give us advice – speaking from experience – that helps us get resolution without compromising our style."

It is important that API Leaders get feedback on how valuable they are in parents' support networks. API's other resources help fill the gap for parents without a local API Support Group, but when available, a local leader is often a parent's primary link to API information – with API's other resources providing additional encouragement. Leaders are literally the on front lines for API.

API Leaders are often a parent's introduction to API. They form the image that parents have of API and even AP.

Of API's other resources, surveyed parents very much appreciate the articles on the website, in the publications, and distributed through social networking sites, as well as the supportive community provided through the forum.

"Although I haven't needed support with many issues, I **read almost everything** and get help before I need it, which is awesome!"

"I get a lot of information from API on Facebook and Twitter and e-mail. From those little bits of information, **I will often follow on to the API website for more information.**"

"I am yet to actively participate in the forums, but **read about things there regularly.**"

While parents tend to seek out local peer support first, it's important to note that many parents see all of API's resources working in harmony.

How to Improve Upon API? Parents Say More Support Groups, More Visibility

The survey gave an opportunity for respondents to give their ideas on how API can be improved upon. Not surprisingly, at the top of the list is the need for more API Support Groups. A very close second, though, is the need for API to have more visibility in mainstream society.

"I would love to see some **public service announcements, commercials, and billboards. We need to educate the masses!** There are still so many parents out there who just don't get it."

Some parents wished that they had found API sooner, so they want to make it easier for other parents to find API, too. They see the struggles other families are having, or are frustrated by the difficulties their own children are encountering in a world of detached families. Many of the surveyed parents are

disappointed by the types of interactions they see between other parents and children in the communities. They feel that most parents simply haven't ever heard of Attachment Parenting.

"I often recruit new moms to our group. And I don't seek them out – I just seem to find them: That mom that you can just see is an AP mom. And **so often the mom will say to me, 'Gosh, I guess I'm AP, but I never knew it,'** or 'I belong to another mom's group, and they think I'm so weird.' I always nod my head and say, 'Yes, we are the moms for you!' We aren't weird, we aren't super crunchy – we are just moms who read a lot and educate ourselves and try not to be selfish in our parenting choices."

Many of the respondents are weary of the seemingly constant criticism they receive for parenting a different way.

"I think it is seen as weird when **it should be the normal way of parenting.**"

"Attachment Parenting is almost unheard-of, and of **those who are familiar with it, many assume it's simply an indulgent way of parenting.** API is leading the charge in defining what it means to be AP, making conscious parenting choices, and very simply, being the best parent possible to all one's children."

"**I constantly get criticism from other parents about how I choose to parent my children,** being told I am coddling them and should be stricter. I feel these children are the future leaders of society, and if we are too restrictive and don't let them know they are special and loved, what kind of people are they going to grow up to be – cold, rigid, and impatient? I'd rather raise sensitive, empathetic, nurturing children who will hopefully grow up to be compassionate adults, so society isn't so negative and unfeeling."

Others surveyed believe so much in API's mission that they want to, as one respondent put it, "scream it from the mountain tops!"

"I guess I feel like it's a model for change: Society as we know it is spinning out of control – we want everything,

but at what cost to our children? **I see my child trying on a daily basis to connect with other kids – looking them in the eye, asking them a simple question, just wanting to engage them on some level – and these kids can't handle it.** They are either aggressive or completely vacant. It breaks my heart, but it's not surprising. If API can change one person's point of view on how they raise their child, if it makes one parent think that, 'Hmmm, maybe they are onto something here,' then I think you have done your job."

"I think API is critical for helping us raise a generation of children who have empathy. I think that's seriously lacking in today's world, and **I think Attachment Parenting can make a difference.** If we are to have a generation of good citizens, they need to have empathy for their fellow humans and need to understand that there are peaceful and positive ways to resolve problems."

"I believe it is extremely important for a decent world. As a social worker, I've worked in inner cities and rural areas, and I know that **raising children with fear and hatred and abuse and not connecting to them when they are young creates enormous, sometimes insurmountable, problems for society** and that a lot of people are unable to ever connect to others due to their upbringing."

"API is important because it reflects what is in the heart of many moms, though it often lacks a voice: That **we know what is best for our children, to trust our instincts and our best guesses,** and to share all that we discover through our own parenting with others."

Survey respondents also gave ideas for improved support to parents, some of which API is pleased to already have **in the works**, and looks forward to more to meet families' needs, including:

- More API presence in developing nations
- A campaign targeting unsupportive family members of attached parents, with additional training for attached grandparenting
- Training for attached parents on how to handle criticism by educating others, rather than becoming defensive

- A campaign targeting parents at risk of becoming abusers. *This is a highly desired goal of API's parent education program.*
- More research, including dissemination of research studies related to each Principle and hyperlinking of advice giving in the forum to an article explaining the research behind it
- Improved searches in the forum
- More resources from Attachment Parenting experts provided free to members. *API is pleased to support parents and experts who are advancing AP and brings them together as often as possible.*
- Free phone counseling sessions to members. *API is launching a virtual support group.*
- Podcasts. *API teleseminars are available to download.*
- Local API-sponsored parenting classes (support groups provide a time for parents to ask questions and give advice, classes aim to teach rather than support). *API's parent education program is in development.*
- School and community parenting programs. *API's parent education program will be tailored for multiple settings.*
- More emphasis on parents who have more than one child
- More emphasis on Attachment Parenting and older children and teens. *API is beginning a new program to accredit Leaders specifically for parenting older children and teens.*
- More personal stories. *The Attached Family online greatly increases API's library of personal stories.*
- More book recommendations. *API is pleased to be launching soon a new comprehensive book and media recommendation program.*
- More articles on discipline and anger management; adoption; parenting sensitive children; parenting

multiples; specific solutions to sleep issues; tandem nursing. *Continues to add resources to the website and its handouts and a number will be available in The Attached Family online.*

- Being allowed to have off-topic discussions during support group meetings, such as not vaccinating. *API Support Groups can discuss these topics at Enrichment Meetings.*

How API Will Use This Survey

It's often said that the best form of advertising is word-of-mouth by people who truly believe in something. Attached parents, on the whole, are extremely passionate about their parenting beliefs. Every day that they live their parenting choices – in the face of criticism from others – they are representing Attachment Parenting families everywhere and are providing a testament to what API can do for the world.

Attached parents understand the value of their parenting choices on their children: They could perhaps undo generations of emotional detached childrearing, or even overt abuse and neglect; they could save their children's future marriages, or even the lives of their grandchildren. Every parent that takes this message of compassionate, conscious parenting to his or her local community – through API leadership and unofficial grassroots advocacy – has the very real potential to change the course of future for not only the families touched by that API Support Group but eventually society itself.

API thanks you, attached parents, for doing your part in spreading the message of Attachment Parenting in your community. API will use the results of this survey to continue improving its programs and publications and local parenting support resources.

How has API Helped You?

Stories from API Support Groups

Heather of Pennsylvania, USA

"I had breast reduction surgery 11 years ago that did not allow me to produce much milk. **My supply was so, so low and it caused a lot of guilt issues. The ladies in my group tried to help and were so supportive.** With babywearing, I needed help finding the right carrier for me. They were so helpful in this. And with cosleeping, no one but an AP family understands this issue. My family is not a source of support when it comes to AP: I was ferberized, and they just don't understand my choices.

"All of the families in our group cosleep or bedshare. We are expecting number two, and I was worried that I would have to stop sharing the bed with number one. One of the moms offered me her Arms Reach Co-sleeper to help! It was awesome!"

Adrienne of Texas, USA

"I worked out of the home and **got excellent support from our API group about pumping while working and nursing when home.** We're still going strong at two and a half years!"

Sarah

"When my son was four, he sucked his fingers constantly, and I wasn't sure if that was normal or if I should be worried whether it was from stress. **An e-mail to our API group showed that three other members with four year olds noticed the same behavior.**

"I realized that this must be normal behavior at that age, so I stopped worrying about it."

Milly of New York, USA

"One of issues that I am having is gentle discipline. **API-NYC led me to Alfie Kohn and Marshall Rosenberg.** I'm hoping that I can get there!"

Kelly of Oregon, USA

"One of my ongoing challenges is maintaining balance. **Our local API group – both in person and online – has allowed me to discuss this challenge with other parents who completely understand my situation.** They share my parenting philosophy and use similar approaches.

"It feels so supportive just to know that other parents genuinely understand what I'm going through, but it's especially helpful to be able to hear others' stories and suggestions. I truly appreciate other AP parents' willingness to share their personal struggles with balance in their lives and to hear everyone's different interpretation of balance. **Our API Support Group has helped me gain a new perspective** of what it means to have balance in my life – i.e., it is different for everyone. It's helpful to have both emotional and practical support!"

Roxanne of Connecticut, USA

"Night weaning: when to do it, how to do it, why to do it, etc. – this has been a discussion through the API-NYC Yahoo! group. I haven't started doing this yet, but everyday, I think about it more and more and it's been great to hear other moms' stories.

"I like to read other moms' stories of how they did it. It's been valuable to know that I can possibly continue to cosleep but still night-wean. I didn't think it would be possible, but now I have confidence that we can do it."

Elaine of Texas, USA

"I began using the AP parenting style for the natural way of parenting a baby. As the baby grew and continues to grow, I am becoming a different parent than I expected because of the support of other AP families. I was trained as a teacher and always believed in behaviorist discipline strategies. **I have made a complete about-face, thanks to my local API group.** I am a gentler, more respectful parent and my discipline style is based on long term goals rather than short term demands.

"Suggested reading, including *Unconditional Parenting*, was eye-opening to me. **Discussions at support group meetings and on the online board helped me put theory into practice.**"

Amanda of Minnesota, USA

"Just today, **I posted to the Twin Cities API Yahoo! group that 'I am only one bite away from quitting' breastfeeding.** My son has three teeth and is using my right boob as a teether. It's painful and making our breastfeeding relationship rocky. I got a heartfelt 'I've been there and it does bite' and some good suggestions on how to stop the biting. I really don't want to quit nursing, and it was important to me that I get advice and encouragement from women who weren't just going to tell me to quit, that I've made it nine months, etc.

"I felt like I had tried everything, and I was really ready to give up. It hurts to be bitten dozens of times a day, and I was fed up. **The API group is invaluable to me.** Without that group, I only know two other parents who parent like us. I've stopped going to other playgroups, because it hurts me to hear how other moms talk about and to their kids. **I think I'd be lost without the API group.**"

Julie of Maryland, USA

"I don't think I have had any parenting issues that have not involved API's support! One of the biggies for us all along has been sleep, or lack thereof. My daughter has always been a poor sleeper and has always nursed all night long, suffering the most separation anxiety at night. We bedshare, and I didn't night wean her until she was over age two, by which time she had finally gotten to the point of only waking twice a night. **Without emotional support from my API friends – as well as their physical help on days when I am a zombie – I don't know how I would have made it through!** I shudder to think of what I might have done without them – cry it out, like everyone else urged? Yikes!

"Mostly what I needed – and got – was empathy and someone to listen to me. I also got an education – about natural child sleep patterns and expectations. And I got a lot of 'me too's' from others who let me know that I was not alone! The encouragement that I was doing the right thing by following my instincts and that my child was not 'ruined for life' has always been, and still is, invaluable."

Mollie of Washington, USA

"I was not gaining weight during my second pregnancy, and our **API meeting was a great time for me to discuss how it made me feel to have people commenting that I needed to gain more weight.** I loved hearing how everyone's bodies are different and that as long as I felt good about what I was eating, that things would work themselves out and they did."

Melanie of New Hampshire, USA

“When I came to the group, I was having a lot of painful nursing issues, but as time has gone on and my daughter and son have grown, I find that the most beneficial help I’ve received is on finding balance and positive discipline. Learning how to respond to my children in a respectful way that enables us to maintain our connection has been key. My daughter is almost four and has never been in a timeout. We are able to work thru disagreements, and if one of us loses her temper, we recognize it and re-connect. I sometimes talk to other parents who don’t know about API and feel sad that they have to threaten their children all the time to engage cooperation.

“I’ve been able to bring up discipline-related issues and get great feedback from parents who’ve been-there-done-that with concrete suggestions of things to say, redirection techniques, or compromises that I hadn’t thought of. For example, my daughter kept wanting to jump on the couch and that was not acceptable to me and my husband. After talking it out with the group, it was suggested that we put cushions on the floor or a mattress on the floor for her to jump on. She loved that idea, and I feel good knowing she is safe.”

Karen

“Extended breastfeeding has been one of the areas where belonging to API groups and knowing other API members has meant a great deal to me. It has helped to be able to share stories – tell them and hear them – of various incidents involving breastfeeding an older child and to talk about the feelings of joy, embarrassment, resentment, etc. that such incidents bring up.”

Alicia of Oklahoma, USA

“I started attending the API group when my first child was one month old. Here, I met friends that raised their children in a like-minded manner. I learned about cosleeping, extended breastfeeding, and gentle parenting.

“API provided a supportive environment for families to come and discuss without fear of being ‘different.’”

Diane of New York, USA

“I had to wean my baby unexpectedly when I got ill, and I turned to the group for advice on how to handle this as well as tips for allowing my mother to take over my child’s care while I was ill. Also, I had to let my baby go for the duration of a treatment, and **I turned to the API e-mail list for suggestions about how to deal with the feelings,** asking what was best for my girl in terms of me demonstrating my emotions or not.

“I received so much support about how to let my mom parent, and validation that it was OK for me to have all the feelings I had around that. The e-mail list made it much easier to feel like I was doing the best I could as a parent even when I couldn’t do anything physically.

Similarly, the advice I got for the separation was to authentically express and communicate with my daughter. That feels completely right to me. Instead of trying to protect her by hiding my feelings, or by letting the story go and telling her later what happened, we can braid it into our family story – such good advice. I also got advice on how to transition her back to us after I’m out of the hospital – simply invaluable.”

Kyle of New Jersey, USA

“When my daughter was nine months old, we realized she was not sleeping longer than 20 minutes at a time during the day. I wore her everywhere, but she just did not sleep if I was moving around and she did not sleep in the car. If she fell asleep after nursing and I tried to lay her down, she woke up immediately. We became very concerned, and I could not find any information in sleep books, and the only option seemed to be to let her cry it out, which we were not prepared to do. We met with an API Leader who suggested I hold her after she fell asleep and that ended up being the way my child could get a nap during the day.”

Sarah of California, USA

"During periods when my daughter was a frequent night-nurser, I went through periods of frustration and fear.

"I found so much support in the API online group and also the meetings. The value was I could lean on the community and know I wasn't alone. It boosted my confidence as a parent and further strengthened my beliefs and instincts."

How has API Helped You?

Stories from other API resources

Jenny of Australia

"I don't really go out of my way to tell people that our daughter sleeps with us, but if it comes up, I don't lie. **I find the information on the API website helpful, because it makes you feel like you are not the only one** and that other people feel passionately about parenting the way that you do. Sometimes you just doubt yourself even if you know it feels right. It's just nice to know you are not alone."

Carrie of Minnesota, USA

"I never would have considered sharing sleep with my kids before finding the Attachment Parenting International online group. Information about the importance of nighttime parenting, bonding at night, and the ease of breastfeeding changed my attitude from believing my son should have been out of my room as soon as he slept through the night – which I envisioned would happen in a few months – to a very healthy and happy family bed. I never really thought about babywearing or knew of the benefits. Life is so much easier when you can comfortably babywear! **My support group gave me confidence and helped me learn how.**"

Heather of Virginia, USA

"When my son was four months old, I had to go back to work full-time. **I found information on the API website about working and Attachment Parenting that was very helpful and supportive.** I ended up quitting and working part-time, but I knew there was support for working parents and that helped.

"I found information on sleep, breastfeeding, and working with my daycare provider."

Gina

"My husband was raised by a detached, unemotional mother and so has unresolved issues himself with expressions of anger at times. I sought information and gained understanding and support regarding how to not let his unresolved issues affect my children. I was able to support him better and provide him with the tools he needs to parent without anger. I still sometimes struggle with keeping balance and find myself often compensating for what he cannot provide my kids. He understands the theory and believes in AP – it is just so far from his experience, so it is not natural for him, especially when it comes to discipline. **I thank API for having the range of resources it has to help me when I am feeling alone in my parenting.** It has also helped me with 'mommy guilt' and cosleeping. **I love API and hope my children benefit greatly from the commitment I so happily have embraced.**"

Andie of Illinois, USA

"My son has always needed someone to help him to sleep. **When I found API, it was so reassuring that what I was doing was helping him, not hurting him.** I would stay with him until he fell asleep, or sometimes I would wear him or nurse him to sleep.

"I posted an 'unsure mommy' type question and was met with very reassuring responses."

Jessica of Colorado, USA

"I have enjoyed reading about all the subjects API discusses. I particularly have felt support and encouragement about nursing and tandem nursing. My second child, Sylvie, was born when my first, Lucie, was two and a half years old. Lucie nursed through the entire pregnancy and continued to nurse after Sylvie arrived. It was not easy to nurse both girls, but it really helped Lucie to love her baby sister instead of being jealous. **My mom turned me on to her API newsletter, and it enriched my understanding of the tandem-nursing relationship.**

"I experienced a great deal of physical and emotional frustration while I was nursing both girls. **I looked to API for help with a gentle and gradual weaning of Lucie, and found, 'Don't offer, don't refuse.'**"

Beth of Massachusetts, USA

"I am new to API and haven't joined a group or become involved in the message board. **I have felt better about my choices, however, in reading blog entries by other members.** One that was particularly helpful was an entry that reminded me to take time for myself and how important that is for me to be a good parent. I have a tendency to always be with my kids and always doing something for the household when I have any free time. I feel guilty if I sit down and read a book or visit a friend for lunch when I know how important that is to my overall well being. How can I be a good parent if I don't feel good?

"It was of great value to me to read this entry and remind myself to sit down and just breathe, especially now that I find myself carrying our third child."

Hilary of Florida, USA

"Barbara Nicholson actually responded to my question about sleep issues and the family bed via a very detailed email, and it was printed in *The Attached Family* magazine.

"I was so impressed that Barbara personally responded, so much so that I introduced myself to her at a La Leche League conference, even though months had passed since the question had been answered and published. I wanted to personally thank her for the validation and support she offered.

"How can it much better than a personal response from the co-founder of API!"

Melissa of Nebraska, USA

"I used a lot of information that I gathered from API to help make my home a more peaceful environment and to help my children get more in touch with each other and increase the positive interactions they have amongst themselves."

Muffet of Texas, USA

"Criticism can be verbal and nonverbal. It can also be felt by the omission of support. My family has dubbed me the 'independent one.' Since I want to raise my children 'my way,' they – my mother especially – have offered very little support. I have gone the opposite of what they think is the right way to do things, so I needed to seek other support and advice. **I found the API website through a search and have bookmarked it and used it often.** I know that parenting my children the way I feel is the right way, but knowing there are others who feel same as I do helps when those around me are critical.

"Just reading about others' experiences and knowing there are experts out there who advocate practices that I am using, like cosleeping, boosts my confidence when dealing with criticism from my family."

Alisha of Tennessee, USA

"I have co-slept with my son for most of his life – he is five years old. Like most parents who choose to cosleep, I have received criticism from many people. So, **I turned to API for support.** I knew I was doing the right thing for my son, and it was nice to hear positive feedback about cosleeping."

Lesley of Florida, USA

"**API's entire philosophy on how to raise caring, compassionate, and happy children is what I intuitively felt I needed to do for my son.** It isn't the norm in my area, so I felt like an outsider when I met or spoke with other moms about parenting. I was particularly alone in the breastfeeding arena – as so many moms simply give up early on. **I'm glad I found API, because I'm still breastfeeding today and my son will be three years old in November!** He's happy, healthy, and wonderful!"

"I needed real, current, and accurate information on breastfeeding and parenting with consideration and respect for my child. **I got everything I was looking for on the website.** It helped put a name on what I was already practicing intuitively and helped give me the courage to continue on!"

Maryam of New York, USA

"**API helped me understand that most babies do not sleep through the night, as I was told previously by many people.** I was worried that my night-parenting skills weren't working and that was the reason why my 11 month old was still waking up two to three times at night for feedings. **API helped me learn that this was completely normal and that my instincts were right** in that I shouldn't let my baby cry it out at night."

"**The articles definitely helped.** I saw that others were in the same boat that I was."

Corinne of Florida, USA

"**Through the forum, I have had the chance to connect with others who are struggling with criticism about how we're raising our children.** 'Put the baby down' or 'let her cry' are the mentalities that many of us are dealing with. Unfortunately, there is no API Support Group in my area, so **the forum has been my primary support.**"

Tori of Oregon, USA

"Sometimes I feel like I'm the only AP parent out there. **API reminds me to stand by what I believe in and that there are other options for my family that don't compromise what I know in my heart is right.**"

"Mostly, I just read the articles and find them to be very helpful. **Just seeing API out there encourages me.**"

Tara of Colorado, USA

"**I used the information from the API website regarding babywearing.**"

"The information regarding nurturing touch was very helpful to me. It not only was informational but was encouraging to me."

Bernie

"My son, who is 14 months old, was feeding several times through the night. Besides it adding physical stress, thus resulting in emotional stress, I was hoping to get pregnant again so I was considering night-weaning to solve both problems. I was unsure if I should force night-weaning. I was worried about the ramifications, and I wondered if it would be the best idea to restart my cycle.

"In addition, **several members of the online support group, including one of my leaders, gave great suggestions and as always, all offered empathic comments, which always makes me feel better – like I'm not alone.** I never feel stupid for posting an issue and am frankly amazed at how many members take the time to thoughtfully respond in an effort to help out someone they have never even met. **It's a great group that is invaluable to me.** I recommend it to all new moms that I meet. In fact, I just recommended it yesterday to a grandmother I met whose 18-year-old, single-mom daughter is looking for guidance."

Andrea of Illinois, USA

"While I'm confident in my parenting choices and always have been, dealing with criticism, particularly from friends and family, can be hard. **API has been helpful in guiding my responses to the critical comments I've received.**

"It's often difficult to make parenting choices that are outside the mainstream. Breastfeeding beyond a few months is 'weird,' responding to your baby's cries is 'spoiling,' and not spanking is tantamount to neglect in many people's eyes. **API has given me many tools on correct responses to those who criticize my parenting methods, while also educating them.**

Attachmentparenting.org is an invaluable resource for me. I use it regularly when a parenting problem arises, and I need fresh ideas. I link others to it whenever I have the chance to discuss – online or in person – the principles of Attachment Parenting



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Children grow to be their healthiest when they're enveloped in securely attached relationships with their parents and caregivers. In time, resilience, compassion and empathy tend to radiate from those who are securely attached and those who are affected may themselves benefit and continue to pass along the benefit to others around them. This is the Ripple effect and Attachment Parenting International (API) is at the epicenter. API is leading the effort to provide all parents, caregivers and professionals the information and support necessary to start and perpetuate this positive ripple into communities, through society and ultimately, around the world. Support the Ripple. Support secure attachments and support the work of API. **Join us in API's Ripple campaign** by viewing the ripple video at www.attachmentparenting.org, making a contribution, and forwarding this message and spreading the word in your own circles of influence and encouraging them to do the same. Thank you.

Support a parent. Start a ripple.