



Babies are born with urgent and intense needs and depend completely on others to meet them. Nurturing touch helps meet a baby's need for physical contact, affection, security, stimulation and movement, all of which encourage proper neurological development and secure attachment. Slings and other soft baby carriers foster nurturing touch that increases healthy growth and development; helps parents keep babies close and safe while hands free; and helps parents avoid the overuse of devices such as strollers, swings, and car seats that can increase the potential for plagiocephaly, or "flat head syndrome."

Attachment Parenting International (API) advocates babywearing as a practice within one of its Eight Principles of Parenting that focuses on fostering nurturing touch.



#### REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- Attachment Parenting International, AttachmentParenting.org
- API Support Groups
- AttachmentParenting.org/parentingtopics/babywearing.php
- *Attached at the Heart*, Barbara Nicholson and Lysa Parker
- *Babywearing: The Benefits and Beauty of this Ancient Tradition*, Maria Blois, MD
- Dr. Sears on Babywearing Benefits and Safety, Balboababy.com
- *Is my sling safe? -or- Not all slings are created equal!* Sleepingbaby.net
- Baby Carriers - Correct Positioning & Safety, Babyslingsafety.blogspot.com
- Babywearing Safety - Facebook
- Babywearing International—Babywearinginternational.org
- Babywearing instructions—Kellymom.com

API thanks the following Babywearing Advocates and Safety sponsors for their commitment to providing families with valuable safety information:



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\*Attachment Parenting International (API) urges parents to use good judgment regarding the safety of their children. API publishes this information knowing that parents practice babywearing, and as such API is committed to keeping children safe and healthy by providing the most current safety information available. There are no definitive guidelines for babywearing safety that are backed by controlled testing; however, API endeavors to provide herein an orientation to safety concerns for all parents. API, its Support Groups, its sponsors, and its partners assume no liability in the event of infant, child, or parent harm and are held harmless from any harm, loss, or legal liability arising from information they provide.

AttachmentParenting.org  
800-850-8320  
PO Box 4615  
Alpharetta, GA 30023

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## Close to your Heart

### Tips and safety information for Infant Babywearing



# BABYWEARING—

## FOR INFANT DEVELOPMENT, PARENT-CHILD CONNECTION AND CONVENIENCE

Attachment Parenting International offers these guidelines to help you confidently practice babywearing. API is passionate about babywearing because research shows that it contributes to fostering secure attachment for healthy infant development. This research, and the many other benefits of babywearing, are described with references in the book, *Attached at the Heart*, and at [AttachmentParenting.org](http://AttachmentParenting.org).

Parents have been successfully wearing their babies for millennium and together we can share the wisdom of the benefits and the safe practices learned and practiced. With a few questions to ask ourselves—good practice for use with any infant product—we can better avoid unnecessary risk to our babies.\*

### IMPORTANT

#### BABYWEARING SAFETY INFORMATION

##### CORRECT POSITIONING

- Have you followed all manufacturers guidelines regarding positioning, age and weight limits? Choose a carrier that has detailed instructions, follow all precautions and directions (many are available online).
- Position your baby in the carrier with care, ensuring proper alignment of head and neck. Ensure the chin is not tucked against the chest, potentially blocking the airway.



- The infant should be in a mostly upright position when not actively nursing, with the head above his body; with support for the baby's back and head—meaning the

sling or wrap cloth is supportive and not letting the baby's body fold. Are the rails (the fabric edges) of the carrier pulled snug?

- If baby is not yet supporting his or her own head, is the carrier adjusted to always support the baby's head?

##### CONNECTED AND COMFORTABLE

- Have you practiced using the carrier? Rather than feel it is awkward or confusing you should feel confident. Practice over a soft surface, low to the ground, or with assistance to protect against falls. Get instruction if you need help. As well as contacting local API Support Groups for help, the list of resources includes helpful video demonstrations.
- Once secure, frequently check on the infant, taking advantage of the connection to your child's wellbeing that babywearing affords. Is your baby breathing comfortably? Is his or her face visible, with no fabric covering it and not pressed into the adult's body? Are baby's legs and hips comfortable, with knees positioned higher in relation to his behind? Is baby protected from too much sun or wind?



##### CLOSE TO YOUR HEART

- Are you and your baby both comfortable? Baby is worn close to your heart not low on the body—making the baby "part" of parent's body and also protecting the parent's back. Because a very young infant may not noticeably complain, the parent must continually evaluate the infant's comfort, wellbeing, and position.

##### CAUTION

- Do not wear your baby in a carrier while riding in the car, boating, jogging, jumping, or cooking or any other activity that involves hazard-prone activity, risk of falling, or that would cause injury from shaking or jarring the infant.
- Always follow the manufacturer instructions while also trusting your instinct if you feel there is something in question with any carrier. If in doubt, check your baby.
- Ensure the integrity of the carrier is intact; check fabric, seams, and any latches for wear.
- Only a responsible, sober adult should engage in babywearing.
- Secure baby with your hand when bending and give yourself and baby enough room to clear door frames or other objects.
- Be aware of what is on the infant product recall list, and return to check as there are new infant products brought onto the market, and always use careful judgment in making a selection.

##### CARRIER CHOICE

- Learn about different carriers, evaluate them and try them out. A carrier should position an infant as if it were in your arms.
- Visit an API Support Group, other babywearing group, or qualified retailer to try on carriers and get information and help with positioning.
- Choose the right size; consider two slings—each to fit mother and father.

