

## Babywearing

What is babywearing?

Babywearing is an instinctive parenting style where a **baby is held close to the parent in a carrier** for a substantial part of the day. It allows a busy parent the freedom to continue their normal daily routine while providing the most nourishing and desirable environment for their child.

Social conditioning has led parents to believe that if a baby is held or carried too frequently they will be spoiled, clingy or demanding. Modern research reveals quite the opposite. The physical and psychological benefits associated with baby wearing **encourage children to feel secure and content** and build a solid sense of self-esteem.

Babywearing **calms fussy babies** and helps decrease the occurrence of postnatal depression. The close proximity of the baby enables parents to respond to 'non-crying' signals, which results in less frustration and stress and most of all... less crying.

Babywearing not only promotes an intimate connection between parent and baby, it is also hailed as one of the **most important factors in the healthy physical, intellectual and social development of infants**. It promotes good digestion which is believed to greatly ease the distressing symptoms of colic and reflux.

Babies worn in slings are less clingy and tend to **initiate separation** much earlier than babies less frequently held. It allows them to be AT the centre of activity not THE centre of attention, which is a wonderful environment proven to stimulate brain development and cognitive learning.

ALL babies are born 'pre-mature', that is they are unable to move or feed alone. Babywearing allows a baby to complete its 'extergestation' period needed for the proper **development and health** of the infant.

The benefits of babywearing

- Babywearing enables the mother to be acutely aware of her baby's cues and signals and heightens her perception of her child's needs
- Babywearing reduces crying and fussiness by up to 51%, with parents feeling more competent and nurturing toward their children.
- Being in close physical contact with a parent provides a baby with a rich learning environment where all of their most important needs can be met - food, warmth, love and touch.
- Babies who are carried learn more, stimulating brain development and expanding their future learning potential.

- Babywearing increases cardiac output, improves circulation, promotes respiration and aids in digestion.
- Babywearing provides the exact level and kind of stimulation an infant requires, energizing their nervous system and creating a quiet, calm alertness in the infant.
- Babywearing decreases the levels of stress hormones circulating in a baby's blood stream, resulting in a more relaxed, happy baby
- Frequently carried babies fall asleep quickly and will usually sleep deeper and for longer periods of time in the comfort of their carrier.
- Babywearing develops the muscles needed for the infant to sit, stand and walk.
- Babywearing enhances motor skills by stimulating the baby's vestibular system (balance organs) by exposing the baby to a variety of sights, sounds and motion,.
- Babies worn in slings feel safe and secure which helps to foster a solid sense of self.
- Babywearing can offer easy access to the infant's food source - mothers' breast milk, without having to stop or sit down.