

What is Babywearing?

There is nothing in the world that compares to having your baby in your arms – the feeling of your sleeping child against your chest, the sweet smelling downy head under your nose. These are moments every mother holds dear in those early newborn days. But life goes on, there are errands to run and things to do. Babywearing allows a busy parent the freedom to continue their normal daily routine while providing the richest and most desirable environment for their child. Babywearing is an instinctive parenting style where a baby is held close to the parent or caregiver in a sling or baby carrier. While it is not a new concept in many parts of the world, Babywearing is rapidly gaining popularity in western cultures. So, what are the advantages for mother and baby?

- **Babywearing re-creates the oneness of mother & baby that existed in the womb & this continuation is so necessary throughout the period following the womb. All humans are born premature, without the ability to walk, talk or feed themselves. Baby wearing easily allows connection between parent & child during this time.**
- Babies sleep comfortably & for longer periods whilst being carried
- **Babies that are carried continuously develop larger brains than infants who are denied this stimulation, they physically develop faster & statistically walk much sooner allowing them freedom of movement & less frustration**
- Day to day activities can be accomplished whilst still having close physical contact with baby
- **Babywearing greatly benefits premature infants & lowers their mortality rate**
- The ability to carry a baby hands-free, when a caregiver needs to attend to an older sibling, makes day to day life easier for the entire family
- **Leave bulky prams & strollers at home. Wear your baby with a soft baby carrier that keeps baby inside your centre of gravity, ergonomically supporting your baby & baby's body**
- Soft baby carriers easily fit into a nappy bag so you aren't taking 'half the house' with you
- **Baby isn't being suspended by the groin (in a soft baby carrier), which can cause compression through the spine**
- Carriers offered by Natural Parenting NZ allow skin to skin contact further enhancing stimulation therefore comfort and development
- **Natural fibres mean far superior breathability by avoiding overheating and discomfort even in warmer weather**

BENEFITS FOR BABIES

Emotional:

- Increases parent/child bonding
- Baby is safe, secure & comforted by hearing parent's body rhythms
- Decreases stress hormones
- Scientifically proven to reduce crying & fussiness by up to 51%
- Baby falls asleep quickly, deeply & for longer periods as parents are close by in their brief awakening therefore baby settles easily back into sleep
- Babies are secure, confident & self reliant due to the foundation of trust built by being worn

Physiological:

- Increases baby's cardiac output, improves circulation, promotes respiration & aids in digestion
- Reduces symptoms of colic & reflux
- Enhances motor skills by stimulating the Vestibular system (balance organs)
- Develops the muscles needed for the infant to sit, stand & walk

Cognitive:

- Carried babies see & experience the world, develop their senses faster, cry less, learn more & thrive better because they are less bored, more relaxed & secure
- Babies spend a lot more time in a 'quiet alert state' when carried – the ideal state for learning

BENEFITS FOR PARENTS

Emotional:

- Increases parent/child bonding
- Increased confidence in ability to care for baby
- Increases freedom of being able to look after your baby whilst still carrying out other necessary tasks like looking after siblings
- Increased freedom to go out while your baby is asleep on your body
- Increased ability to cope with the stress and emotion of having a baby
- Reduces the risk of post-natal depression due to increased hormone levels

Physiological:

- Increased breast milk supply
- Parent's are not weighed down by prams, making outdoor exercise easier therefore more likely

Cognitive:

- Parents quickly learn to understand baby's cues as they are in close contact, giving parents greater confidence and far, far less stress.

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