

Tips and rules for Babywearing from Babywearing international:

Babywearing International believes that babywearing is an inherently safe activity. But as with any other baby or child product, it is important to observe a few basic safety tips.

Make sure your child's airway remains open at all times while babywearing. The best way to do this is to keep him or her in an upright position, high enough on your body to monitor breathing and ensure that her chin is off her chest. Babywearing International recommends that infants only be held in a horizontal or cradle position while actively nursing (if desired) and return to an upright or vertical position as soon as they have finished.

It is also important that your carrier provide adequate support for your infant's developing neck and back. Ideally baby should be held with his knees higher than his bottom with legs in a spread squat position and support from knee to knee although with older babies and toddlers full knee to knee support is not always possible or necessary. An ergonomic carrier (whether a soft structured carrier, Asian-style carrier, sling, or wrap) will provide better support for baby and will be more comfortable for the caregiver as well.

Always inspect your carrier for wear or damage before use examining it for weak spots, loose stitching, worn fabrics, etc. BWI recommends purchasing a carrier from a reputable manufacturer to ensure that it meets all current US safety, testing, and labeling standards.

Practice all carries—especially back carries—with a spotter, over a bed or couch, or low to the ground until you are completely confident. A BWI meeting is the perfect place to learn new skills with the assistance of a Volunteer Babywearing Educator. In most cases it is best to be comfortable with front carries before attempting back carries.

Always exercise common sense while babywearing. Baby carriers are not an approved child restraint or flotation device and should not be used in moving vehicles or boats or even when we ride on cars, even those electric gaming ones. Avoid babywearing in situations where it would not be safe to carry an infant in-arms.

Rules For Baby Wearing

The rules....

1. Baby should be visible and kissable (when in front of parent)
2. Baby should be upright, facing parent and not facing away.
3. Base of carrier should go knee-to-knee, keeping the knees above the hips.
4. Baby should be able to sit unassisted before they are carried on the back or in any soft structured carrier.

Types of Carriers:

Ring sling can be used from birth throughout toddlerhood but takes some practice for positioning and security.

Stretchy wraps like Moby, K'Tan can be used from birth until about 15 lbs when they weigh down the stretchy fabric. These are cheap and easy so they are good "gateway" wraps.

SSCs (soft structured carriers/buckle carriers) like Ergo, Tula, Lillebaby, etc are great for kids already sitting up. Without core muscles their spines will be compromised because SSCs don't support the sides of the torso like other wraps. These are great carriers for dads because it feels more like a backpack. Avoid narrow-base carriers or outward-facing like Bjorn because they increase stress on the hips and force spinal extension before ready.

Woven Wraps - the most versatile but also the most difficult to learn. Would recommend for a mom really passionate about babywearing and willing to practice various holds without getting disheartened.

Mei tai is a Japanese carrier, a blend between a woven wrap and a buckle carrier that is easy to use, comfortable, and adjustable-base versions (fly-tai, hop-tye) are capable of supporting smaller babies.

Ultimately carriers must have baby in upright position, facing mom/dad, with knees elevated above hips in froggy squat position, with available support for head if they fall asleep. Babies should be "visible and kissable" to ensure proper airway.

Tips for those wearing the carrier –

1. Work on your shoulder mobility and flexibility to get a good and snug carry.
2. Stay well adjusted so that you don't hurt yourself while carrying the baby.