

Babywearing Times

Spring 2011



Welcome to the Babywearing Institute Magazine! We hope to use this space to keep you up to date on the news at the Babywearing School and in the babywearing world.

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The [forums](#) are OPEN!!!

C'mon in!! Join us!

Chat amongst yourselves,
ask questions, find answers
from babywearing educators.

[Upcoming classes:](#)

July 27-30, October 26-29 Beginning & Advanced classes in Logan, UT.

June 12-13 Babywearing Retreat for continuing education.

[Infantino learns from the BEST!](#)

While we were in California, the Babywearing Institute met with leaders at Infantino for a corporate babywearing training seminar. Everyone there was open to learning everything we had to offer and we are hopeful to see them implement their newfound knowledge of optimal positioning and safety.

[California classes were a great success!](#)

We had a great time teaching another two classes of future Certified Babywearing Educators in California. Thank you to Giselle Baturay for hosting at her store, Granola Babies, in Orange County, and Heather Lent for hosting at her store, Banana Peels Diapers, in Fairfield. We look forward to working with you all in the future!

Emergency Babywearing – Keep them close to keep them safe.

By Tanja Martinson

A few times over the past couple of years babywearers have discussed what to do in case of zombie attack. The discussion and reasoning behind the carrier choices has been well thought out and extremely funny. Some choose a long woven wrap for its versatility – not only can you wrap various size children in many positions (little ones in front for security, plus you can still see over their heads to spot zombies; big ones on back once they're old enough to wield their own weapons) but it can also be used as a hammock, blanket, storage bag, rope or reins for that horse you found wandering in the streets which will now carry you all to safety. Plus, it has lots of places to carry weapons or granola bars. Others choose their favorite supportive mei tai or quick-clickin' SSC for a speedy escape. Or you can go on the offensive like Susan Horn from [Sweet Pickles](#) and choose a bag sling or crotch dangler to ward off the zombies and protect her favorite carriers (and children) from harm.

But, as I was preparing this newsletter we were struck with a real life disaster scenario that has to make us all stop and take a closer look. We have all seen the images of the effects of the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami that hit Japan on March 11, 2011. As babywearers we were also likely touched by the images of the [woman wearing a child on her back as she waded through the rubble](#) or the [video of the father who promised his](#)

[pregnant wife that he would keep their son safe](#) and wore him close.

Are we really prepared for an emergency? Do you have a carrier set aside with your emergency supplies? One in your car? Do you know how to make a carrier from household items?

Here's a quick list of household items and how they can be used as carriers:

- **Flat bed sheet** – tie it into a rebozo for a one shouldered carry; roll, scrunch or cut off excess on the diagonal to create an Obi-style strap carrier for an older baby, child or even adult; thread it through the arms of a sweatshirt, sweater or t-shirt to create a podaegi.
- **Beach towel** – makes a great torso carrier, kanga-style with a baby on the back.
- **Sweatpants** – use for a quick back carry like a strap carry or ruck-under-bum (RUB).
- **Long-sleeved button-up shirt** – can also be tied kanga-style for a torso carry by tying the arms on top and the tails on bottom.
- **Inside your own shirt(s)** – carrying an infant in front, tucked into your own shirt or jacket can be very secure. Make sure the shirt is not covering their face and blocking their airway/flow. Tying a second open shirt (like a man's button up) over the t-shirt, under the baby's bum/legs helps secure

them inside. A belt can also be used to secure the bottom of a shirt/coat.

- **Duct tape** – If all else fails, there's always duct tape. It's been used to create a podaegi-style carrier with a t-shirt or pillowcase. You could secure long lengths doubled on themselves as straps for a strap carry or as part of a mei tai or podaegi you weave out of more duct tape...if you've got nothing better to do. **Be careful** though

as duct tape can tear easily (especially a single layer).

There are many more options for creating a carrier in an emergency. Please always make sure that your baby is carried in a safe and secure manner – even in an emergency. Make sure their airway is clear and their hips, back and neck are supported as appropriate for their development.

Education can be worth Millions! By Tanja Martinson

There are many companies out there advertising uses of their baby carriers based on what *can* be done instead of what *should* be done. There are many babywearing advocates and educators promoting use of slings and positioning based on the same criteria – if it can be done, it must be OK. A prevailing argument seems to be that they must give parents what they say they want instead of educating them on what their babies need. The fear of alienating a potential babywearer or customer by providing them accurate, science-based information is unfounded.

Take a lesson from [ERGObaby Carriers](#). ERGO has never given in to or supported the idea that facing babies out in a carrier was necessary or correct. They have, in fact, expanded their level of education by working with experts from around the world through their [ErgoParent.com](#) magazine. Included in their list of experts are Dr. Evelin Kirkilionis, who also works in

close contact with Beate at the [Babywearing Institute](#) regarding proper positioning in a carrier for optimal hip and spine development, and Dr. Henrik Norholt a Ph.D who has been studying the effects of babywearing on the psychological and motor development of infants. Dr. Norholt has written an [article](#) confirming that not only is a front facing out position detrimental due to overstimulation – and the wrong kind of stimulation – but also that it cuts the baby off from being able to read cues in its parent's face and is not the ideal position for hip and spine development. He states clearly, supporting what we Certified Babywearing Educators have been taught and should teach others, that once a baby reaches the developmental stage of being interested in interacting with its world more a hip or back carry in a spread-squat position is ideal.

ERGObaby Carrier has made millions of dollars selling its carriers without compromising on educating its customers about proper positioning and use of its carriers based on scientific studies. In 2010, the owners of ERGObaby Carrier sold the company for over \$92 million dollars.

You do not have to compromise the education and information you provide in order to succeed. Providing consistent, clear information which is supported by science will pay off – in your business, in your babywearing and in the future of babywearing in our country.

The Premies are here!



NEW preemie size babywearing educator dolls are now available through the [Babywearing School website](http://www.BabywearingSchool.com). These are invaluable tools for teaching in hospitals, birth centers or simply working with new parents of a premature baby. (And they're super cute!)

Meet your Certified Babywearing Educators!



Tanja Martinson –

Auburn, WA

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I'm mama to two wonderful kids. My first, now 10 years old, was the one that *needed* to be worn. She was a very spirited baby who needed to be attached to me 24 hours per day.

When she was 2 and still desperate to be worn, I searched for help and went to an API meeting hosting a local babywearing "expert". When she told me there was no carrier that would fit a "fluffy" mama and toddler, our babywearing days came to a crushing end. In hindsight, this was even more frustrating because even 10 years ago there were carriers available that would have worked for us.

When my son was on his way 5 years later, I was on a mission to find a better carrier for us. After buying and returning several online, I found a lending library in the area and started my real babywearing education. I read through countless websites and forums and attended meetings trying to learn as much as I could about different carriers and how to use them.

Eventually, I broke out of my shell and started sharing what I knew. My husband has really encouraged me to pursue my babywearing career. Aside from snuggling with my babies, talking to others about wearing their babies

has been one thing that really lights up my face.

I've been teaching babywearing and running [The Sling Lending Library](#) for 3 years now. I became a Certified Babywearing Educator because after researching on my own, I felt I was finding a lot of advice that didn't quite make sense to me. I wanted to make sure I knew and was passing on only the best information possible to the parents looking to wear their babies.

I'm currently offering private consultations, group sessions, business training, information sessions and will be offering teacher certification courses in the near future. I'm available to teach primarily in the Seattle/Tacoma area but will also gladly travel throughout the U.S. and internationally if it works for my family – because, as always, they come first. I've also created the Babywearing Institute's forums and the inaugural issue of this magazine.



Sheri Gress –

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I knew I wanted to babywear (though I didn't know the term for a long time afterwards) from even before I was pregnant with my first. After Isobel was born, there was no question that she would have tolerated that store brand harness carrier my husband bought second hand! I searched for slings, and

ended up with a closed-tail, very short tailed, heavily padded ring sling. I used it exclusively with Isobel for her first 13 months. At that point, struggling with even her small weight on one shoulder, I attended a baby show where we met the local AP Europe/babywearing group. My husband, who had previously been ambivalent about slings, rapidly became an active advocate for babywearing. While pregnant with our second, I decided I really wanted to learn to wrap. Megan was wrapped (and in the occasional other carrier) from her second day of life, and was worn every day until after she was 2 years old. We still wear both girls, though not every day or for as long now, and are forever grateful for having found this option and the good friends we have met along the way.

I've been teaching about 2 years now and really enjoy helping parents find what works for them and their babies. While I can teach without certification, it is important to me that I am providing parents with the best correct and current information possible, and certification helps to ensure that I do.

I do one on one consultations, group classes, general information sessions, and troubleshooting/advisory meetings. I have also done staff training for baby gear shops, and am working with some local resources to expand the information base here.



Susan Horn – West Linn, OR

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I created [Sweet Pickles](#) in March 2008 as an extension of my love and passion for babywearing. I never feel more empowered as a mother to know I am doing what is best for my babies than when I wear my babies. What amazing knowledge to have in caring for my sweet precious miracles! My local area didn't have many options for safe carriers, and that is when opening a retail store became a reality.

It has been an incredible experience, full of many new friends, and although sometimes running a business while staying at home with my three girls has been challenging I would not change it for anything. Aside from the joys of my family and friends, it is such an honor to be a part of the babywearing community.

I learned a lot over the past few years about babywearing, the carries, the brands, the options. This past Fall while attending Babywearing School I was refreshed back to the beginning, of why I was so passionate about babywearing and what I love so much about it. Although my own children are not worn as often anymore, my passion is more vibrant than ever. I am absolutely dedicated to teaching safe and ideal babywearing and supporting the babywearing community. It is of utmost importance to me that how babies are worn is the safest possible. Yes, many carriers could be used for many different positions. This does not

mean all those positions are the SAFEST or BEST for babies. Please know that I will only make recommendations based on what I've learned through my experience and education to be absolutely the safest and best for babies, whether it is a carrying position or carrier recommendation. Not just what is okay or possible. Our babies deserve the best!

I'm optimistic that in the future many more families will know and love wearing their babies. I'm so happy to be a part of that future.

Currently I'm working on completing the licensed to certify exam, and offer consultations privately when asked if it works into our busy family schedule. It is not something I'm currently advertising as a service. I do run my store online, and help my customers with the assistance of fellow Babywearing Institute classmate, Reina Phillips, with their babywearing needs.

Adriane Stare – Brooklyn, NY
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I am Adriane Stare, mom to Damien who is almost 20 months. Babywearing for me began the day I had Damien. Excited to hold and snuggle him, but unhappy with the comfort and heat of my stretchy wrap, I made an trek across 3 boroughs of New York City to visit a babywearing store that could provide me with a new carrier and some helpful tips for carrying my son. From that day forward, I have used nearly every type of carrier and have grown with them or through them, and still

continue to carry him every day. I became a woven wrapper when he was about 6 months, and continue to favor that as my preferred method for carrying babies, however am able to see the pros and cons of each carrier and understand how many types of carriers may be right for many different types of people.

I have seen many mothers and friends of mine give up on babywearing simply because they were never shown the proper and comfortable way to carry their children. For me, wearing my son was the single most important thing I learned as a new mother, so my quest has become my quest to help them! I decided in the fall of 2009 that a natural parenting store featuring high-quality, sustainable and natural products for parents and babies was much needed in my community, so I began to form my business plan. My new store and class space, [Caribou Baby](#), is now open for business just as of this month! I have been teaching parents how to use carriers informally, and now will be offering large, formal classes to groups in the store.

Since I was going to opening a babywearing store and strove to teach formal classes to new parents, I wanted to make sure I was completely informed about aspects of babywearing. There are safety and positioning specifics I needed to know inside and out, and also many situational babywearing cases to which I would need to know how to respond (ie. moms of twins, parents of children with special needs, mastitis sufferers, etc). I wanted to be confident that I was helping people and

not disseminating improper information based on personal practice alone.

I give parents and expectant parents shopping for carriers as much information as I can while they are in-store if they have questions. I am also going to be offering a regular babywearing basics class for the community on an on-going basis, so I can teach basic wrap technique, introduce parents to the different styles of carriers and cover safety information. I would love to have a lending library, but need to work out the logistical and legal pieces of that first!



Karin VanNordstrand – Freeport, ME Karimemama@me.com

I am a 39 year old mother of one growing boy (who will be 7 this month!). I attempted to learn to wear our son by reading and researching online back in 2003. And although I am incredibly grateful for those manufacturers and babywearing advocates who posted how-tos online back then, it was not an efficient or fun way to learn such an important set of parenting skills, and I wished for in-person instruction!

Our son was an intense and vocal newborn, and my husband and I needed every possible skill to help him to settle into himself and learn that the world was a good place to be.

Once we were able to confidently and successfully wear him, as a compliment

to the nursing he already took much comfort in, he was a much more relaxed and resilient little person.

I taught my friends to wear their children, then their friends to wear theirs. I learned to make and use as many types of carriers as I could.

I opened [KariMeMama](http://KariMeMama.com) to teach and sell carriers in Maine in 2007, adding certification at the first opportunity. I started our local babywearing group around the same time, to meet those needs within the community that aren't best met by private consultation.

It is still a joy every time I see the positive changes in young families which result from adding this incredibly valuable skill set to their family dynamic. I love giving one on one instruction. I am available for home visits for lessons or lessons with carrier purchase, group consultations, special needs consultations and collaboration with your physician, guest speaking (overview of babywearing), advice/resources for sewing your own carrier.

Heather Felker - Milford, DE

Congratulations to the Felkers on the addition of their 8th little one to the family.

Happy Babywearing!

We'll meet Heather in an upcoming newsletter.