

The Benefits of Baby Carrying

Written by Elizabeth Antunovic

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The Trouble with Car Seats

Strollers that position a baby in a somewhat upright position (such as in infant car seats) may be gentler on the baby's C-shaped spine, in that they do not stretch it flat. But car seats are not a much better option for transporting your little one. Research by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association shows that they are not the ideal transport for your infant when not in the car, due to restricted postural options which can impact your baby's developing cranium and spine.

By keeping the spine in a C-shaped configuration, these contraptions

can actually prevent the natural curves from forming. Babies can have a hard time acquiring

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Tuning Balance

Another benefit of carrying your baby is that carried babies receive a lot of vestibular stimulation, whereas lying babies do not. Our vestibular system helps us out with our sense of balance and our security in space. When a mother holds her baby, the baby moves back and forth with mom's walking, and side to side from her swaying or rocking. Mom may stop and turn and reach to grab something, or she may move gently and smoothly. These varied movements force her baby to respond appropriately to keep himself balanced. All of these movements tune her baby's vestibular system.

A stroller moves either forward or backward, offering movement on a single plane, and not very varied. When changed from the upright position and the containment of his mother's arms to the horizontal position laying down uncontained, a baby may produce random movements and suddenly flail his arms and legs, as if to save himself from falling. This is called a baby's Moro reflex. It acts as a baby's primitive fight/flight reaction, and is replaced later in life by an adult's startle reflex.

Carrying, rocking and swaying stimulate an infant's vestibular apparatus and help them to feel secure in space. Most babies today spend most of their day apart from their mothers in a container or in a stroller, leaving them prone to vertigo, and a feeling of physical insecurity in space in general. Native Americans are typically very secure in space; they are actually known for their comfort with heights and apparently tend to have little problem working tall construction projects. Most traditionally raised Native American babies are swaddled or spend most of their infancy either in cradleboards or on their mothers' hips, leading to enhanced vestibular development. Interestingly enough, the fear of fido and the fear of high plagues many of today's adults can often be traced back to not being carried as an infant. Carried babies feel secure, and are less apt to develop space-related phobias.

Constantly Learning

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Babies have reason to feel secure. They physically need to be in close contact with their mothers. They giggle and coo and drink in all of our expressions. Upright on mother, they are

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