ℬABYWEARING—
FOR INFANT DEVELOPMENT, PARENT-CHILD CONNECTION AND CONVENIENCE

Attachment Parenting International offers these guidelines to help you confidently practice babywearing. API is passionate about babywearing because research shows that it contributes to fostering secure attachment for healthy infant development. This research, and the many other benefits of babywearing, are described with references in the book, *Attached at the Heart*, and at AttachmentParenting.org.

Parents have been successfully wearing their babies for millennium and together we can share the wisdom of the benefits and the safe practices learned and practiced. With a few questions to ask ourselves—good practice for use with any infant product—we can better avoid unnecessary risk to our babies.*

IMPORTANT BABYWEARING SAFETY INFORMATION

CORRECT POSITIONING

- Have you followed all manufacturers guidelines regarding positioning, age and weight limits? Choose a carrier that has detailed instructions, follow all precautions and directions (many are available online).

- Position your baby in the carrier with care, ensuring proper alignment of head and neck. Ensure the chin is not tucked against the chest, potentially blocking the airway.

- The infant should be in a mostly upright position when not actively nursing, with the head above his body; with support for the baby's back and head—meaning the sling or wrap cloth is supportive and not letting the baby's body fold. Are the rails (the fabric edges) of the carrier pulled snug?

- If baby is not yet supporting his or her own head, is the carrier adjusted to always support the baby's head?

CONNECTED AND COMFORTABLE

- Have you practiced using the carrier? Rather than feel it is awkward or confusing you should feel confident. Practice over a soft surface, low to the ground, or with assistance to protect against falls. Get instruction if you need help. As well as contacting local API Support Groups for help, the list of resources includes helpful video demonstrations.

- Once secure, frequently check on the infant, taking advantage of the connection to your child's wellbeing that babywearing affords. Is your baby breathing comfortably? Is his or her face visible, with no fabric covering it and not pressed into the adult's body? Are baby's legs and hips comfortable, with knees positioned higher in relation to his behind? Is baby protected from too much sun or wind?

CLOSE TO YOUR HEART

- Are you and your baby both comfortable? Baby is worn close to your heart not low on the body—making the baby "part" of parent's body and also protecting the parent's back. Because a very young infant may not noticeably complain, the parent must continually evaluate the infant's comfort, wellbeing, and position.

CAUTION

- Do not wear your baby in a carrier while riding in the car, boating, jogging, jumping, or cooking or any other activity that involves hazard-prone activity, risk of falling, or that would cause injury from shaking or jarring the infant.

- Always follow the manufacturer instructions while also trusting your instinct if you feel there is something in question with any carrier. If in doubt, check your baby.

- Ensure the integrity of the carrier is intact; check fabric, seams, and any latches for wear.

- Only a responsible, sober adult should engage in babywearing.

- Secure baby with your hand when bending and give yourself and baby enough room to clear door frames or other objects.

- Be aware of what is on the infant product recall list, and return to check as there are new infant products brought onto the market, and always use careful judgment in making a selection.

CARRIER CHOICE

- Learn about different carriers, evaluate them and try them out. A carrier should position an infant as if it were in your arms.

- Visit an API Support Group, other babywearing group, or qualified retailer to try on carriers and get information and help with positioning.

- Choose the right size; consider two slings—each to fit mother and father.