

API Board of Directors

Janet Jendron
President of the Board

Barbara Nicholson, MEd
API Founder, President Emeritus

Lysa Parker, MS
API Founder, Director Emeritus

Lu Hanessian
Author, LettheBabyDrive.com

Reedy Hickey, IBCLC

Gena Kirby
Mommy Matters Online

Stephen Knight, JD

Judy Sanders

Art Yuen

API Advisory Board

Elliott Barker, MD
Canadian Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Children
(CSPCC)

Stephen Bavolek, PhD
Family Nurturing Centers

Sir Richard Bowlby, Bt.

Barbara Clinton, MSW
Center for Health Services
Vanderbilt University

Isabelle Fox, PhD
Psychotherapist & Author

Jay Gordon, MD
Pediatrician and Author

Jan Hunt, MS
Child Psychologist & Director,
The Natural Child Project

James McKenna, PhD
Anthropologist

Alice Miller
Author & Childhood Researcher

Peggy O'Mara
Editor, Mothering Magazine

Bruce Perry, MD, PhD
Psychiatrist & Neuroscience
Researcher

Martha Sears, RN
Registered Nurse & Author

William Sears, MD
Pediatrician and Author

Michael Trout, MA
Director, The Infant-Parent
Institute

Karen Walant, PhD
Psychotherapist & Author

Samantha Gray
Executive Director
Attachment Parenting International

API Statement on Babywearing Safety Concerns

Attachment Parenting International (API) is an advocate for the practice of babywearing and its benefits to infants, children and their parents in strengthening family bonds that nurture the development of children.

As a grassroots, nonprofit organization that advocates for the overall health and welfare of children and families API helps parents by providing evidence-based information on the core principles of parenting that contribute to the optimal development of children.

As the Consumer Product Safety Commission prepares a statement on the use of slings for babywearing, API supports its efforts to provide parents with important safety information that guides them in decisions to care for their children. Any product, such as certain infant car seats, for instance, must be designed and created with care and used as instructed.

API Board member, physician and author of *Babywearing: The Benefits and Beauty of This Ancient Tradition*, Dr. Maria Blois shares API's position:

“Our hearts go out to those parents who have lost their babies while trying to hold their babies close in a sling. This CPSC warning is very important if it can help us prevent even one death. It is important to understand that *any* baby carrier can be used in an unsafe manner and certain carriers promote improper positioning simply by their design. This does not mean that the act of babywearing is unsafe. It means that we must insist on clear safety rules and products that encourage safe babywearing.

“API welcomes good randomized controlled trials supporting the best positioning for infants in baby carriers and the best designs to promote this optimal positioning. Until then, our best guess is that baby should be held upright, visible at all times, mouth and nose clear, and head and neck should be in good alignment. In order to best learn from the CPSC warning, we should know what types of slings were involved and the circumstances surrounding the deaths. Babywearing is wonderful for parents and for babies. This should be about education and understanding how to make babywearing safer for everyone.”

Baby slings have been used for centuries by mothers all over the world to great benefit and rarely have babies suffered injury or death. Evidence supports these benefits of babywearing:

- For the child, nurturing touch stimulates growth-promoting hormones, improves intellectual and motor development, and helps regulate babies' temperature, heart rate, and sleep/wake patterns.

CPSC Letter regarding sling safety
Page 2

- Babies who receive nurturing touch gain weight faster, nurse better, cry less, are calmer, and have better intellectual and motor development.
- Cultures high in physical affection, touch, holding or carrying, rate low in adult physical violence.
- Carrying, or babywearing using a soft carrier, meets a baby's need for physical contact, comfort, security, stimulation and movement, all of which encourage neurological development.
- A sling can help parents avoid the overuse of devices designed to hold a baby independently, such as swings, jumpers, plastic carriers, and strollers. These devices are major contributors to plagiocephaly, or “flat head syndrome.” Using a sling is protective in terms of reducing the reliance on products that the CPSC has also addressed for infant safety concerns, including swings, jumpers, strollers, bouncy seats, walkers, and plastic carriers.

Understandably, babywearing has surged in popularity as parents have become more educated about the physical and emotional developmental benefits to babies that babywearing facilitates. As babywearing is not an incidental practice but for many families inherent to their parenting philosophy, API recognizes the need to give these parents access to complete and accurate information to help them in reclaiming their parental instincts for fostering a secure attachment with their baby.

API supports acknowledgement of infants’ developmental and emotional, as well as physical, safety benefits of being carried closely to their parent in a sling, and as such, not use a broad stroke against all slings but rather provide parents a checklist for safety as well as the relative benefits of using a sling for safe infant care. API will continue to do its best to support educational efforts for babywearing and safe use of slings.

Sincerely,



Samantha Gray
Executive Director



Janet Jendron
President, Board of Directors

Attachment Parenting International