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Oregon Nonprofit Brings Babywearing Research to Action to Support Parents

Nuturely, an Oregon-based nonprofit focused on equity in perinatal wellness, bridges the gap between research and practice to help parents carry their baby as a tool for relieving stress, promoting bonding, and supporting human milk feeding

EUGENE, OR (July 8, 2021) ---

Parents are overburdened with medical and societal recommendations of how to care for their baby, when what they really need is support to make these tasks easier. Human milk feeding, for example, is recommended by all major health organizations and is critical for disease mitigation in both infants and parents. Yet parents often don't have access to the necessary support for this time-intensive task and health professionals are faced with the difficult task of promoting breast/chestfeeding in a society that is unsupportive. [New research from Nuturely](#) points to a simple solution for supporting parents who wish to breastfeed or feed their baby expressed milk: providing infant carriers to increase parent-infant contact.

In partnership with a team of researchers and community health professionals from University of Oregon, University of California Merced, University of Texas at Austin, and Project Concern International, Nuturely conducted a randomized controlled trial to test the effect of infant carriers on breastfeeding outcomes. After a six-month intervention where half of the parents received an ergonomic baby carrier and half were assigned to a waitlist control group, parents in the intervention group were more likely to be breastfeeding or feeding expressed milk at six months (68%) than control group parents (40%). Although there are many reasons some parents might breastfeed for longer, the randomized design ruled out confounding factors providing strong evidence that infant carriers increase breastfeeding at six months postpartum.

Nuturely's goal is to bridge the gap between research and practice to improve equitable access to wellness and support for parents. "This research confirms that we cannot neglect the importance of parent-infant contact when designing policies and societal expectations for new parents" says lead author of the study and Executive Director of Nuturely, Emily Little, PhD, CLEC. This research informs the trainings Nuturely provides for healthcare professionals and employers on the science of parent-infant contact and how it can translate to supportive policies and practices for parents. Breastfeeding isn't the only proven benefit from baby carriers, as this

study adds to existing research showing that carriers can decrease crying and facilitate parent-infant bonding. Portland-based Physician of Family Medicine with Obstetrics Dr. Amelia Haas Baker, MD, PhD, IBCLC, shares: “I have often recommended babywearing to parents of infants with colic to reduce crying or to overwhelmed parents of multiples or those who've recently delivered their second or third as a way to accomplish the many tasks at hand. Now I can say, supported by evidence, that babywearing may be a two-for-one intervention that also helps with reaching their feeding goals rather than making human milk feeding yet another task to accomplish.”

Out in the community, Nurturely is already putting the evidence from this research into action by sharing babywearing education in their virtual postpartum preparation groups for [pregnant parents](#) and expectant [fathers/partners](#). Parents in Eugene looking for in-person connection as well as babywearing education can check out Nurturely’s newly launching [Babywearing & Bailando](#) class, a fun, free opportunity for parents to learn to safely use a carrier to dance with their baby. This class will be in both Spanish and English and all are welcome, with no experience required and all materials provided. Nurturely is also partnering with [Healthy Birth Initiatives](#), a culturally-specific program that supports pregnant African American mothers, fathers, and children, and the [90by30 Initiative](#), a community-campus partnership housed at the Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect at the University of Oregon, to dispatch carriers out to parents. These evidence-based babywearing programs are supported by grants to Nurturely from the [Oregon Community Foundation](#), the [Ronald W. Naito MD Foundation](#), and the [Eugene Active 20-30 Club](#).

For more information about Nurturely, contact Executive Director Emily Little, PhD, at emily@nurturely.org, visit the website at nurturely.org, and follow @nurturely on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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About Nurturely: *Nurturely is a nonprofit that promotes equity in perinatal wellness and strengthens cultures of support for infants and caregivers through preventative knowledge-sharing, collaborative exploration, and proactive community engagement. Nurturely’s programs focus on increasing community-led, culturally-responsive, preventative services with the goal of helping all infants and caregivers access their optimal wellness. In addition to programs for expectant parents, Nurturely conducts community-participatory research and provides innovative, interdisciplinary training opportunities for perinatal professionals.*