



# Equipment Considerations to be Active with Babies and Toddlers



## Strollers and Carriages

These items are essential for making sure you and your baby spend time outdoors. It can be difficult to choose the best stroller for you and your baby because they come in many different styles and sizes, from the classic carriage to the jogging stroller.

When buying a stroller, you need to think of size, weight, how easy it is to steer, how sturdy it is, safety, and your lifestyle. Make sure to check for weight and age restrictions since some strollers are not to be used for newborns. To learn more about choosing your stroller, visit these websites:

- Health Canada - Strollers and Carriages: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/child-enfant/equip/carriage-landau-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/child-enfant/equip/carriage-landau-eng.php)
- KidsHealth - Strollers: [http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/home/products\\_strollers.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/products_strollers.html)
- Baby Centre - Strollers: [www.babycenter.ca/baby/buying-forbaby/prampspushchairsbuggies](http://www.babycenter.ca/baby/buying-forbaby/prampspushchairsbuggies)

If you decide to buy (or borrow) a second-hand stroller, you should make sure that:

- The brakes work properly;
- No finger traps or sharp points on the stroller will hurt your baby;
- The fabric is clean and not worn out;
- It is stable and sturdy; and
- It has instructions so you can be sure you are using it properly.

## Infant Carriers

Babies love to be held. A baby carrier allows your baby to be close to you while your hands are free to do something else. They are also a great way for partners, family members, and friends to be part of your baby's care.

Front carriers or slings are made for newborns and young babies. A front carrier is made of a fabric seat supported by two shoulder straps. A sling is a long fabric panel worn across the adult's chest and shoulders. While some slings are simple wraparounds without buckles or straps, others may have adjustable shoulder, waist, or ring straps.

A backpack carrier is a backpack with a fixed frame and a fabric baby seat. Backpacks are made for older babies

(4 or 5 months and up to 3 years) who can support their own heads and who have a strong back. Backpacks provide more support for you than front carriers or slings.

Before using an infant carrier, follow these simple safety tips:

- Stretch out your neck, shoulders, and upper and lower back muscles before and after carrying your baby.
- Start with 10 to 15 minutes of carrying your baby around the house to get used to the weight of your baby in the carrier.
- Watch your step and walk on level ground when you have your baby in a carrier.

Remember that your baby will be growing fast and will become quite heavy sooner than you think. Because of this, infant carriers can only be used for a short time, depending upon your strength and how safely you can carry your growing baby!

To learn more about how to select the best carrier for your baby, visit:

- Health Canada - Baby Slings and Carriers: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/child-enfant/equip/slides-bandouliere-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/child-enfant/equip/slides-bandouliere-eng.php)
- How to select the right baby backpack: [www.ehow.com/how\\_4864\\_select-baby-backpack.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4864_select-baby-backpack.html)
- How to select the right sling: [www.ehow.com/how\\_4867\\_select-sling.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4867_select-sling.html)
- Consumer Reports Backpack Carrier: [www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/baby-toddler/backpack-carriers/backpack-carrier-buying-advice/index.htm](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/baby-toddler/backpack-carriers/backpack-carrier-buying-advice/index.htm)
- Consumer Reports Baby Carriers: [www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/baby-toddler/baby-carriers/baby-carrier-buying-advice/index.htm](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/baby-toddler/baby-carriers/baby-carrier-buying-advice/index.htm)

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For more information on CAAWS' *Mothers in Motion* project, please contact [caaws@caaws.ca](mailto:caaws@caaws.ca) or visit the website at [www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/](http://www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/).

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