



## Tips for Growing Your Baby's Brain

### Tip #4: Wear Your Baby

Before birth, a mother's body regulates the baby's basic body functions. After birth, babies must suddenly regulate basic functions such as heart rate, breathing, and stress responses all on their own.

When exposed to stress, babies and adults release the stress hormone, norepinephrine. When feeling stressed or threatened, infants cannot take action, such as defending themselves. Instead, they become irritable, disorganized, and unable to be calm.

One of your many jobs as a parent is to protect your baby from stress. This helps your baby become calm and confident and helps protect his brain from stress hormones that can cause lasting harm.

A good way to protect your baby from stress is to think about the womb lasting 18 months—nine months inside and nine months outside. Carry your baby in a sling or a front pack so she slowly gets used to the outside world. This provides a safe, womb-like environment that helps your baby feel secure.

When you "wear" your baby, he is like a part of you. Your baby can easily look into your face and be a part of everything you do. The stress of the baby's new and unfamiliar world is presented in a safe and gradual way.

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Carrying your baby in a sling or other carrier also frees your hands to eat, attend to other children and do household chores.