

## Views You Can Use

### About... Infant Seats, Car Seats, and Other Carriers

by

Sally Goldberg, Ph.D.

Q. I have heard that overuse and misuse of infant seats and other carriers might have a relationship to future problems of ADD/ADHD and obesity. Is there any truth to that?

A. While there are no studies as yet that indicate a direct relationship, there is information that suggests care should be taken not to overuse or misuse infant seats, car seats, and other carriers.

Human beings are mobile creatures. They are meant to be on the move much of the time. The younger the child is the more there should be movement. Babies and toddlers should be free to move as much as possible. Infant seats, car seats, and other carriers are designed to help parents for those times when they cannot either carry their children or watch them carefully as they move around, crawl, or walk. These devices were not meant to be used as much as they are today. The more babies and young children are transported, the less they are engaged in hands-on, exploratory, and exercise activities. These are the kinds of interactions that foster both the ability to focus and the opportunity to burn calories and maintain a proper weight.

## Infant Seats

A mother cannot hug, hold, and caress her baby, toddler, or young child too much. This kind of touching is a relationship-building and bonding activity. Interestingly enough, a mother's arms increase in strength at the exact same rate as her baby's growth in weight. That is why a grandparent, relative, or friend might find a baby too heavy to carry when a mother easily totes her child from place to place.

INSIGHT... An infant seat is that perfect place for a baby when a parent cannot either hold his/her baby or find a safe place to put him/her down.

Many parents keep a baby in some kind of seat for long hours at a time. Babies, like all other human beings, thrive on individual attention and personal interactions. These experiences early on contribute to a child's ability to focus and learn. They are necessary for normal development. Moving, right from the start, is also what helps a baby, toddler, and young child gain their needed muscle strength to accomplish each milestone of development starting with holding up his/her head, pushing up, rolling over, sitting up, crawling, and walking.

## Infant Seats with Bells and Whistles

There are special seats with hanging toys, vibrators, and music that aid in the soothing process. There are also other convenient designs that convert car seats to infant seats for parent convenience. In addition, high chairs and swings have their place too. Upon seeing such a variety of appealing mechanisms, it is easy to think that seats should take the place of soft blankets and rugs, vibrations should replace natural rocking, and that music should override natural singing. However, this is not the case. Mom should be careful not to take her baby from one kind of seat to another without interacting with him/her and therefore creating an almost seamless “no-hold-your-baby” process.

While infant seats, car seats, and other baby carriers are helpful, it is important to be aware of the importance of every minute. Read, sing, talk, and play freely with your baby as much as you can. No matter what age your child is, creating hands-on personal interactions and the opportunity for movement will always be beneficial.

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Sally Goldberg, Ph.D., parenting specialist, empowers parents to solve parenting problems. She gives weekly parenting classes in different locations in Scottsdale, AZ. If you would like to contact Dr. Sally, you can reach her at 480-766-6323 or [drsally@drsallyparenting.com](mailto:drsally@drsallyparenting.com). Find out more at [www.drsallyparenting.com](http://www.drsallyparenting.com).

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