

Baby Carriers/Pouches Encyclopedia Article

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Ann Moore, the mother of three grown children, is the force behind the *Snugli*, a cloth baby-carrier she devised after returning to the United States following a Peace Corps stint in Togo. After her first child was born in the early sixties, Moore longed for a baby carrier similar to those the Africans used, which dispensed with the cumbersome bulk of the traditional Western stroller and permitted parent-child contact. Moore's first attempt to fashion a model like the African carrier she admired was a lengthy strip of fabric she used to bind her child to her chest. The next effort was a joint project with her grandmother, Lucy Aukerman. The pair made a pouch from an old sheet, added crisscrossed backstraps and holes for the infant's hands and feet, and the *Snugli* was born. By 1983 their creation was earning Moore and her husband \$6 million a year. As popular as the *Snugli* was, one mother found it uncomfortable. Proudfoot of Eugene, Oregon, designed a baby carrier that shifted the weight of the child to the back rather than the chest. Her carrier, *Andrea's Baby Pack*, was then patented, and Proudfoot's cottage industry was launched. Infant car seats with a removable carrier allow sleeping babies to continue to sleep when being lifted from the car. Modern baby carriers are made in styles that carry babies in front, in back or in a sling or pouch arrangement. Baby may face out or face in, and sometimes a single carrier offers both choices. Selection of a carrier depends on the age and size of the child, the size and possibly the fitness level of the person doing the carrying, and personal preference, both parent and child's. For some mothers, the ability to conveniently nurse while the baby is in the carrier is important. As with the earliest *Snugli*, the inspiration for many carrier designs is an ethnic group such as Inuit, African, or Native American.