

Babies – Out and about

Traditionally, Nigerian women carried their babies like this on their backs. You will often see babies carried like this today.

Some women around the world carry their babies on their backs or chests or attach them to their sides with baskets, cradleboards, multicoloured fabrics (like the Nigerian woman in the picture), or modern factory-made baby carriers, which can be worn on the back or front.



Andean mothers wear a manta. These thick, woollen, blanket-like fabrics are beautifully woven textiles. They can be made from sheep, alpaca, or llama wool and are tied around the mother's neck and shoulders.

Throughout Mexico, rural weavers and other craftswomen wear babies in a rebozo, which is a long, narrow rectangle of fabric. Indigenous Mexican women use it to attach children to their hips or the front of their bodies. It's usually woven from cotton on a backstrap loom.

Kogi women of Colombia strap their newborns to their backs in a large cloth, similar to other slings around the world. However, their slings have an additional strap that goes around the mother's forehead.

1. What other ways are babies carried around the world, apart from in a pram or pushchair?
2. How are babies carried around in your country?
3. Why is the woman in the picture using an umbrella?

Babies – Bath time



Baby's first bath is an important event among the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. The baby is scrubbed thoroughly, and all their limbs are oiled and stretched while they are visibly inspected to check that there are no broken bones and that all ten fingers and toes are complete.

1. What do you notice about the women in this picture?
Look at their clothes and their hair.
2. What items do you recognise in the picture?
3. What is the woman doing?
4. What does bath time look like in your household?

Babies – Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding is natural and often best for babies. However, it is not always possible for women to breastfeed for various reasons. Breastfeeding in public is also not readily accepted by people in other countries around the world. Traditionally, it was commonplace for Nigerian women to breastfeed their babies in public, and in modern times, you will often see women breastfeeding in public, like in this picture.

Breast milk is free, healthy, and in many instances safer because it does not require bottles to be sterilised or for the milk to be at the right temperature. In tropical countries where electricity supply is not regular, there may not be easy access to hot water or refrigeration. In this situation, breastfeeding is a better option.

1. Why do you think breastfeeding might not always be an option for some women?
2. Look at the women in the picture. What do you notice about how they are dressed here?

Babies – Caring for baby's belly button



When a baby is born there is a little stump left after the umbilical cord is cut. The stump will usually dry and fall off within a few weeks, but it must be kept clean with gauze and water only.

In the picture below, a new mum is cleaning her baby's belly button stump and massaging it with a warm compress to help it heal quickly. The belly button is what is left when the stump falls off.

Did you know that the Navajo, who are native Americans in the Southwestern United States of America, bury the dried umbilical cord?

1. What items do you recognise in this picture?
2. What do you think the little boy is saying or pointing to?
3. What is another word for belly button?