



## Thinking of becoming a VBE?

### What is a VBE?

VBE stands for Volunteer Babywearing Educator. It is the entry level and basic accreditation through Babywearing International. Every recognized Babywearing International Chapter requires a minimum of two VBEs. A VBE is required to have a basic knowledge of babywearing and skills in all basic carriers and carries as well as knowledge of safety and ideal positioning while babywearing. The VBE accreditation is reserved for educators who are affiliated with a chapter of Babywearing International.

### How do I become a VBE?

VBEs must have experience using and teaching the five main types of carriers (ring sling, pouch sling, wrap, soft structured carrier, and mei tai). VBEs must have both newborn and toddler babywearing experience. If your baby is not at least one year old, find a way to practice toddler babywearing before requesting an application. Likewise, if you have a toddler, but didn't wear him or her as a newborn, you should find a way to practice newborn babywearing before requesting an application. If you have a local BWI chapter, you must regularly attend meetings before requesting an application.

### ***Becoming a VBE as part of an existing chapter:***

1. Attend meetings in your local chapter as often as possible.
2. Contact a VBE of your local chapter and express interest in becoming a VBE.
3. If your chapter requires a training process, initiate this process according to chapter guidelines. Upon completion of the training process, request a written VBE application.
4. Fill out the written application.
5. Send your application back to the leader of your chapter. Your leader will forward it to your region's Babywearing International Regional Director along with a Letter of Recommendation.
6. If you pass the written assessment, you will be asked to perform a skills assessment with a Master Babywearing Educator (MBE). This is done either through Skype or in person.

### ***Becoming a VBE as part of a new chapter:***

1. Two VBEs are required to start a new chapter, so you will need another candidate willing to form the chapter with you.
2. Contact the regional director for your state.  
(<http://babywearinginternational.org/pages/regionaldirectors.php>)
3. Ask for a VBE application and begin the chapter affiliation process.
4. Fill out the application and send it back to the regional director, along with a letter of recommendation from a co-applicant. This can be done at the same time as the chapter affiliation process.
5. If you pass the written VBE assessment, you will be asked to perform a skills assessment with a Master Babywearing Educator (MBE). This is done either through Skype or in person.

### ***Skills Assessment:***

In the skills assessment you will need to be prepared to demonstrate the following:

- Pouch Sling
  - Front, hip, and cradle carry
  - How to tell if a pouch is the proper size
- Ring Sling
  - Front, hip, and cradle carry
  - How to thread
- Wrap
  - Pretied Pocket Wrap Cross Carry
  - Front Wrap Cross Carry
  - Hip Carry of your choice, plus how to modify for a long wrap where applicable
  - Rucksack
  - Multilayer back carry of your choice
- Mei Tai
  - Front, back, and hip carry
- Soft Structured Carrier
  - Front, back, and hip carry
- Two methods for getting a baby on your back
  - Superman Toss
  - Hip Scoot
- How to breastfeed in all carrier types.

## **What is expected of a VBE?**

### ***Meeting attendance***

VBEs are expected to attend meetings with their local chapter. If the chapter meets weekly or more, minimum attendance is once per month. If the chapter meets bi-weekly or monthly, minimum attendance is once every three months.

### ***VBE Dues***

VBEs are required to pay \$30 in annual dues to BWI, which covers VBE insurance. All volunteers of Babywearing International are covered by our insurance policy while volunteering on behalf of our organization in any locale or setting. This includes chapters' mandatory free monthly meetings as well as private consultations and in-home visits performed as volunteers. This also includes teaching voluntarily at hospitals, retail locations, trade shows, festivals, or other locations, even if there is a charge to attend the event. Volunteers are also covered if they receive monetary compensation for travel to and from aforementioned events, but their time at the event must be unpaid and performed as a volunteer of Babywearing International. Babywearing International reserves the right to refuse coverage at locations that we consider to be harmful to the mission of our organization or a potential risk factor for our volunteers or organization.

### ***VBE TBW Group Participation***

VBEs are expected to participate in the private [thebabywearer.com](https://www.thebabywearer.com) group for BWI VBEs. The TBW group helps local chapters communicate with the organization as well as share ideas to help and encourage other VBEs. This means that participation in TBW is a VBE requirement and you are expected to check in regularly.

### ***Positive Conduct***

VBEs are also expected to represent BWI and their local chapter well. This means speaking positively about their chapter and about Babywearing International. It also means being seen babywearing properly (and posting pictures of babywearing that represents best practices). Also remember that in most boards and FB groups or pages, someone can easily search your name and see all of the posting that you've done. Try to keep your posts positive and helpful and avoid engaging in drama or misrepresenting your knowledge. As a VBE, people may take your answers as fact. So if you aren't sure about something, be careful about answering

or tag someone who you think might know, rather than giving potential mis-information. VBEs are required to communicate Babywearing International's stance on controversial topics such as narrow based carriers and forward facing carries, and to be welcoming and accepting of all babywearers.

### ***No Solicitation***

BWI also expects that we do not ever solicit on behalf of any business. If you work for, own, or have any other interest in a babywearing related business , you may not solicit or advertise your business at chapter meetings or on chapter Facebook pages. This means that you cannot create posts advertising your services or business and you may not try to sell items or drum up interest in your business at group events.

### ***Maintaining VBE Status***

In order to remain certified and insured, you must maintain current VBE dues to Babywearing international as well as adhere to all of the codes of conduct set forth in the VBE handbook (which you will receive after your skills assesment, but have been summarized above). Failure to abide by the code of conduct in the VBE handbook (including by soliciting for a business) will result in loss of VBE status and removal from the chapter's leadership team.

### ***Chapter-specific Requirements***

Individual chapters may have additional requirements for VBEs, such as attending leadership meetings, completing or assisting with meeting reports or quarterly reports (which must be completed by each chapter), assisting with or overseeing membership, treasury, or lending library, assisting with social media management, etc. Your chapter leadership can share these additional requirements with you.