The city government of Sunnyvale, California, re-launched an exciting campaign to promote cloth diapers. Several years ago, waste management officials in this Bay Area city decided that it was in their best interest to advocate cloth diapers to the city’s residents. The issue has been on the back burner for the last few years, but last spring, on Earth Day, Sunnyvale kicked off a fresh campaign to get parents to consider cloth diapers for their babies.

The issue of diaper waste was first brought to the attention of the Sunnyvale City Council over ten years ago, when a local parent complained to the council that her day care provider would not let her use cloth diapers for her child. Members of the city council were intrigued to know how disposable diapers might be increasing garbage collection rates for the city, so they hired consultants to conduct a study of the city’s waste at the Sunnyvale Materials Recovery and Transfer (SMaRT) station. The study showed that diapers were the single largest consumer good in Sunnyvale’s trash, with 840 tons of disposable diapers thrown away each year at a cost of more than $110,000 for the local government. City officials found this to be an enormous waste of money and decided to do something about it.

The city’s solid waste program manager, Mark Bowers, told me that the Solid Waste and Recycling department in Sunnyvale weighed their options. They realized it was unrealistic to opt for a city ban on disposable diapers, since it would anger and alienate some residents of the city. It would also be unproductive, since people would just buy disposable diapers in a nearby city. As an environmentally-minded parent who used cloth diapers on his own children, Bowers suggested that the city launch a public education and outreach program to encourage cloth diaper use, which was approved unanimously by the city council.

“Throwaway diapers are tremendous use of resources that personally offends me,” says Bowers, who was thrilled to be part of a campaign to promote cloth diapers. He said if disposable diapers suddenly disappeared, “There could be a two percent reduction in monthly residential garbage rates in Sunnyvale.”

After several years, this campaign is finally off the ground. As with any bureaucracy, the issues of money, time, and priorities have been problems. Bowers says that, over the years, consumer electronics disposal, hazardous waste and water pollution among other issues have taken priority. He also mentions that only 4% of the 130,000 residents of Sunnyvale are children of diapering age. “Their parents make up a small group that is hard to reach.”

Richard Gurney, the Recycling Coordinator in Sunnyvale, agrees that marketing for this issue can be difficult. Most local newspapers ignored their press releases and would not write a story about it. Even if they were interested, Gurney says, “Local articles would not help the issue. Most newspaper readers are older people who are not in our target audience. We need to reach out to daycares, birth instructors, and hospitals.”

Still, Bowers and others in the Solid Waste Division, like Dorlene Russell, the Environmental Outreach Coordinator in Sunnyvale, have kept the issue alive. Last spring, they launched a small campaign in time for Earth Day. With a glossy brochure promoting cloth diapers, and presentations made to family service organizations and birth classes, they have begun reaching new parents. City officials conducted a few focus groups last year related to the diaper issue. One of the findings was that new parents wanted more information and support regarding cloth diapers.
on the Road, be your own cloth-diapering self

By Lori Taylor, with Heather L. Sanders

In the Fall 2005 issue of Real Diaper News, Heather Sanders wrote about “Vacationing With Cloth Diapers,” offering detailed advice on how you can travel with your baby in cloth diapers. For this issue, we asked RDA members to share their own experiences vacationing and traveling with cloth diapers.

We found that RDA members were concerned with reactions of their traveling companions and their hosts and with washing, but those who responded agreed that it was worth the extra work to keep their babies in cloth diapers.

They’re Watching You

RDA members reach out to educate those around them about cloth diapers. Think of traveling as an opportunity. Sometimes our efforts to show that cloth diapers are real diapers can be subtle, even unintentional. An effective way to advocate cloth diapers is to simply do what you do. No soapbox, no frills.

Real Diaper Circle Leader, Danielle Whittaker from Tennessee, told us about her experience traveling to the Florida Keys for a family reunion. “This was the one time I was considering using disposables, but thankfully my supportive dh [dear husband] said, ‘No ma’am, you put my son right back in those cloth thingys.'”

There they were, the whole extended family spread through just a few rooms while vacationing in the beautiful Florida Keys. No one could miss the cloth diapers in their midst. Danielle saw their strange looks and answered their remarks. They hadn’t seen diapers like Danielle’s pocket diapers before. But, the family learned from watching Danielle cloth diaper her son. Just by doing what she would normally do, without setting out to talk about diapers or change any minds, Danielle showed her family that cloth diapers are easy and normal, even away from home.

By the end of the trip, Danielle said the family agreed that new styles of cloth diapers were “so economical and parent friendly that it just makes sense to do it.” Not only were Danielle’s baby and husband happy, but she quietly lived the RDA mission “to make cloth diapering accessible and acceptable.” Using cloth diapers is normal. People need to see it to understand it.

Just do what you do. Cloth diaper you baby. The process is not so different away from home; it just takes some planning and preparation.

Check with Your Hosts

When you begin using cloth diapers, even before you add the challenges of being on the road, you need support. It helps, for example, if your spouse is as supportive as Danielle Whittaker’s husband was.

If you travel, you expand the circle of support that you need to use cloth diapers successfully. Be sure that the host, whether it’s grandma or a hotel in Costa Rica, can accommodate your needs. They don’t have to be as enthusiastic as you are, but you do need to work within any limits they set.

Laura Johnson from North Carolina, has in-laws who “discourage laundry in general at their house.” Laura’s solution is to wash diapers just before leaving home and to take every diaper she owns. “This keeps the baby in cloth as long as possible.” When she visits her own parents, they welcome her to wash diapers at their house. Don’t assume your host will fit your diapering routine. Just learn how you can best fit their expectations then adjust as you would with anything you do while you are a guest.

Even if you are hesitant to ask, your hosts may ask you themselves—especially if they are your parents or parents-in-law. You have probably already discussed your parenting choices with them, and they understand that you want to continue to do what you find best for your child. Karin Perlotto of Connecticut, was approached by her mother-in-law. “We were at my mother-in-law’s house and she actually came to me, unsolicited, and told me that I should feel free to do cloth diaper laundry in her machine if I needed/wanted to. I thought that was just about the nicest thing.”

RDA Board member Marie DiCocco from Virginia has traveled all over Europe and the U.S. with a baby in diapers. “Any time we would visit family or friends, we simply took along our cloth diapers, because they were what we used, and it never occurred to us that it might be problematic.” If she was away more than a few days, she would ask to wash the diapers. Otherwise, she just kept them in a bag until she returned home.

You may decide to take a stand for cloth diapering. That is good. But, when you aren’t on home territory, you may find that you get more of what you want by gentle request than by demand. Just make sure that both you and your hosts know what to expect so your trip will go as smoothly as possible.

Here’s the Biggie: Washing

How do you wash diapers while traveling? It all depends on your trip. You may not wash at all.

If you normally use a laundromat, washing diapers while traveling might not be so different. If your host has a washing machine and is willing to let you use it, you are home free.

If you can’t find a way to wash the diapers away from home, maybe you can get them partway there by rinsing or a quick cleaning. Karin Perlotto of Connecticut, was didn’t want to impose on her generous mother-in-law, so she washed only wet diapers as a guest, leaving soiled diapers until she arrived home.

Once, when my family traveled with my husband on a business trip across several states, we made our own low-tech washer. We put water in a 5-gallon plastic bucket in the back of our rented truck with a little detergent and some Bac Out. We tossed dirty diapers into the bucket. The motion of driving agitated the diapers and started the cleaning process. We left the diapers in the bucket for a week then washed them when we arrived home.

So what if you don’t know how you are going to work out the details yet. I like to plan details like this on a trip, but serendipity might work with you. When better to have an adventure than when traveling the world? Marie DiCocco just happened to find a laundromat while on a trip to Toronto with her 15-month old daughter, so she washed diapers.

Marie has diapered on the road from Italy through Eastern Europe, then back to North America through Canada and the U.S. For the trip to Toronto, Marie “packed a good supply of my prefolds and flat diapers that I had recently bought. Each night, I would rinse out her diapers really well in the sink and hang (Continued on page 5)
# RDA Business Member Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Wildflower Diapers</td>
<td>Shannon Doan</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wildflowerdiapers.com">www.wildflowerdiapers.com</a></td>
<td>Scottsdale, Arizona</td>
<td>(888) 677-3228 toll free</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bitty Bums</td>
<td>Heather Scheermann</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bittybums.com">www.bittybums.com</a></td>
<td>Peoria, Arizona</td>
<td>(623) 792-8675</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Blue Penguin</td>
<td>Carol Stewart</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bluepenguin.biz">www.bluepenguin.biz</a></td>
<td>Los Angeles, California</td>
<td>(888) 422-2945 toll free (323) 344-1311 fax</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Granola Mamas</td>
<td>Nikki Burns &amp; Heidi Guthrie</td>
<td><a href="http://www.granolamoms.com">www.granolamoms.com</a></td>
<td>El Cajon, California 92020</td>
<td>(619) 444-6298</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Righteous Baby</td>
<td>Ann Hall</td>
<td><a href="http://www.righteousbaby.com">www.righteousbaby.com</a></td>
<td>Lyons, Colorado</td>
<td>(303) 823-5980</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Papaya Patch.com</td>
<td>Cari Wolverton</td>
<td><a href="http://www.papayapatch.com">www.papayapatch.com</a></td>
<td>West Hartford, Connecticut</td>
<td>(800) 521-0701 toll-free (860) 521-0731 fax</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Sunshine Diapers</td>
<td>Brenda Wells</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sunshinediapers.com">www.sunshinediapers.com</a></td>
<td>Gainesville, Florida</td>
<td>(352) 335-2093</td>
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<td>Buzzie Bee</td>
<td>Jennifer Moore Temple</td>
<td><a href="http://www.buzziebee.com">www.buzziebee.com</a></td>
<td>Rockland, Maine</td>
<td>(207) 542-0505</td>
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<td>Kelly's Closet</td>
<td>Kelly Wels</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kellyscloset.com">www.kellyscloset.com</a></td>
<td>Waterford, Maine</td>
<td>(888) 701-7015</td>
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<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>The Natural Life Store</td>
<td>Kristine Higginbotham</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thenaturallifestore.com">www.thenaturallifestore.com</a></td>
<td>Coon Rapids, Minnesota</td>
<td>(763) 439-2026</td>
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<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>DiaperPin</td>
<td>Jennifer Liptrot</td>
<td><a href="http://www.diaperpin.com">www.diaperpin.com</a></td>
<td>Oldwick, New Jersey</td>
<td>(908) 872 4407</td>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Our Natural World</td>
<td>Laura Johnson</td>
<td><a href="http://www.diaperchangingparty.com">www.diaperchangingparty.com</a></td>
<td>Warsaw, North Carolina</td>
<td>(910) 293-7673</td>
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<td>Natural Baby Supply</td>
<td>Jean Van Zyl</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naturalbabysupply.com">www.naturalbabysupply.com</a></td>
<td>Hillsborough, North Carolina</td>
<td>(919) 338-1861</td>
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<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Precious Beginnings Diapers N' Things</td>
<td>Amy Rapp</td>
<td><a href="http://www.diapersnthings.com">www.diapersnthings.com</a></td>
<td>Pataskala, Ohio</td>
<td>(888) 247-4533 toll-free (614) 367-0718 fax</td>
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<td>Time For A Change</td>
<td>Nicole Cameron</td>
<td><a href="http://www.time-for-a-change.org">www.time-for-a-change.org</a></td>
<td>Stow, Ohio</td>
<td>(866) 229-8797 toll-free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Granny's Ark</td>
<td>Julie Claunch</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grannysark.com">www.grannysark.com</a></td>
<td>Beaverton, Oregon</td>
<td>(503) 997-506</td>
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This list is current as of Feb. 21, 2006.

To see complete descriptions of our business members and Circle Leaders, go to: www.realdiaperassociation.org/directory
Why I choose cloth: from our members

“Growing up, I watched my mother cloth diaper my brothers and sisters. I remember putting my own cloth diapers - snap-closing fitted and AIOs lovingly made by my mother - on my dolls, and sometimes on my siblings. So, when it came time for me to think about diapering my own baby, my mother was ready to lend a hand by buying me a pattern and a few lengths of flannel. As a student & a single mother, the decision was a no-brainer - cloth money would save me money! Thirteen years later, it's still saving me money, and is healthier for everyone involved, to boot. Not only does our family use cloth diapers, we've moved on to cloth hankies, menstrual pads, cleaning cloths, and toilet-paper alternatives. It just makes sense.” -- Stell Michaelsen in Petoskey, Michigan

“It has been a life long effort of mine to make "green" choices whenever possible. In addition to choosing cloth diapers, my family uses cloth in the kitchen for napkins, towels, mops and tablecloths. We also use cloth tote bags in favor of paper and plastic when out and about. It is a wonderful feeling to walk past these disposable products in the grocery store and to know we are making the right choice.” --Jennifer Liptrot, owner of DiaperPin in Oldwick, New Jersey

“Cloth diapers mean a future for my children and their children's children both Environmentally, Economically, and Physically. Cloth Diapers are reusable, Cloth Diapers can be made without the use of bleach (no Dioxin). Cloth Diapers do not contaminate our ground water. Cloth Diapers do not leave residues on our skin. Cloth Diapers can help ensure fertility in our children. How can it be wrong? It is just so right on!” --Felisa Leppo in Patrick Air Force Base, Florida

“I chose cloth first because of the cost factor. Once my son was born and broke out in a horrible rash from disposables, my decision to try cloth became all the more important. Within three days of wearing cloth, his rash improved. I no longer see the waste leaving my house on trash day and I have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing something I can feel proud of!” --Christina Neff in Gainesville, Florida

“I chose cloth for the same reason that I chose home birth and breast feeding: because it is best for my baby, best for me, and best for the planet. It gives my child a healthy and conscientious start in life. It helps to lay the foundation for raising a socially and environmentally conscious human being, which I believe to be my responsibility as a parent. I am a single mom, working both in and out of the home, and practicing attachment parenting. If I have the time, than anyone does. It is just ONE extra load to wash every few days. And I must say, there is no household task as enjoyable as pulling the fresh, clean diapers from the drier or line to fold. I received a lot of discouragement from well meaning friends and family, due to the limited time and financial resources of my particular situation. When it came down to it, I knew I just couldn't live with the idea of landfills spilling over with so much of mine or my daughter's unnecessary waste, or the many times proven, cancer causing chemicals of disposables absorbing into my daughter's brand new, wholesome, perfectly pure body! And now, 3 months into my cloth diapering experience, I can't imagine doing it any other way. The time I spend on cloth is no greater than the time I would spend going to buy and haul out disposables each week. It is so much easier than everyone said it would be, and a choice that I can feel proud of!” --Christina Neff in Gainesville, Florida

“Using and reusing cloth has been a part of my life for a long time. We always have used cloth napkins on the table and I have used cloth mama pads for 15 years. When I became pregnant, it was only natural for me to choose cloth diapers. Saving money is nice, and reducing waste in landfills is also important. I prefer to use natural, chemical-free products throughout my home, and especially on my child. Plus I love to sew and sewing diapers is a fantastic creative hobby. I haven't used a disposable diaper in 2 years and can't imagine that I ever would again.” --Cynthia Thompson in Portland, Oregon

“I want the very best for our children and the earth. I learned about the health risks associated with disposable diapers and decided right away that I would be cloth diapering my children. I also know I am doing something important for the environment. I believe it is our responsibility as parents to leave the earth as healthy as possible for our children and our children's children and so on. Saving our earth is so important for future generations. I can not believe anyone would have a child without doing everything possible to give them a healthy life and a safe environment.” --Kristine Higginbotham, owner of The Natural Life Store in Coon Rapids, Minnesota

City Council takes the lead (continued from page 1)

In conjunction with the campaign, Tiny Tots, a diaper service located in nearby Campbell, California, offered a free trial of their service to new customers in Sunnyvale. The free trial started on Earth Day last year and ended in August. Shannon Nugent of Tiny Tots told us, “We didn’t have many takers, but that may have been because of our inexperience with marketing. Many people didn’t know about it.”

As a result of the Sunnyvale focus groups, Tiny Tots holds a free Diaper 101 class every month. In the class, they provide hands-on experience using basic prefold diapers, the style Tiny Tots offers its customers. Classes also give an overview of the environmental issues surrounding cloth diapers and discuss various types of diaper covers. So far, the class has been booked solid for the last six months and has yielded many new, educated customers for Tiny Tots.

This spring, Dorlene Russell, Sunnyvale's Environmental Outreach Coordinator, is holding a cloth diaper informational workshop for local community members. Representatives from Tiny Tots and Real Diaper Association will be on hand to answer questions. Russell agrees that new parents need education about diapers. “Most use disposables because they don’t see any other choice. When people are ignorant about cloth, it is not an option for them. We want to show them see all their alternatives.”

As unlikely as it seems that a city council and local waste officials would take up the issue of cloth diapers, remember that cloth diaper awareness in Sunnyvale, California, grew from one parent going to her local city council to protest a day care provider’s resistance to allowing cloth diapers. If you see a problem in your city, formulate a solution. Speak up for cloth diapers.

Angelique Mullen is a mother, an RDA founder and activist, and a former school teacher. She lives in Daly City, California with her husband and four year-old daughter, and is expecting another baby in April.
On the road (continued from page 4)

The motion of driving turns a 5-gallon bucket into a low-tech washer.

them to dry over the towel bar of our bathroom. They’d be dry by morning, when I’d fold them and stick them in a plastic bag. This kept them from stinking.” Plan A was working fine, then Plan B worked even better.

“It was an easy process,” she said, “and it never occurred to me that people might consider it difficult.” It’s easy if you think it is. So much about diapering is in our own attitudes toward what we are doing. It might turn out better than you think.

Jennifer Moore Temple of Maine usually line-dries diapers, but she dried them by machine while staying with relatives. “Our daughter remembers the time we visited Aunt Kate and she got ‘fluffy didies.’” Happy diaper memories! More good news.

In the end, washing away from home doesn’t have to be a burden. Did you think it was going to be difficult to wash diapers at home before you did it? With experience and confidence, it turns out to be easy. You will probably find the same on the road. Survey your options before you leave, and let cloth diapering be part of the adventure.

Your Packing List

Once you have the traveling companions settled into the idea of cloth diapers and you have a plan for washing (or not), then comes the fun part. Pull out all of the diapers in your stash and look them over. That’s just for fun, but now you can more easily decide which diapers will work best on the road.

As you make your packing list, consider your particular needs.

• Will your baby will be sitting or standing? In last issue’s article, Heather Sanders pointed out that a sitting baby compresses an absorbent diaper, making leaks more likely. Do you need more absorbent diapers than usual? Pack your most absorbent diapers.

• How long will you have to wait between diaper changes? Remember that baby’s skin will stay healthier if you can change more often, but realize that you may not have the option to change as often as you do at home. If you will have long periods of confinement in a car or on a plane, you might want to use nighttime diapers even during the day. Savannah Rogers of Arizona prefers “to have the twins in fleece-lined, extra-absorbent diapers for the car trips, since they stay drier longer and we don’t have to stop for diaper changes unnecessarily.”

• How will you clean your baby’s bottom and your own hands? If you are camping, you probably won’t have running water. Try a spray bottle of water with a few drops of essential oil to spray on your cloth wipes. If you aren’t sure you will have hand-washing facilities available, keep on hand a travel-size bottle of antibacterial hand gel for emergencies. If you will be staying in a house or hotel, you can wash your hands easily, but don’t forget to provide for cleaning and hand washing during travel time.

• Where will you store clean diapers? Storage depends how you are traveling. Danielle Whittaker carried a whole suitcase full of diapers to a resort. Savannah Rogers kept clean diapers in a laundry basket in her car. You probably won’t carry a suitcase or a laundry basket if you are hiking and camping. Can you leave most of the diapers in your hotel while you pack light for a day out? Let your travel plans dictate what you use for a diaper bag, a changing station, and transportation of the rest of your stash.

• How will you store and carry wet and soiled diapers? A waterproof bag is essential if you need to leave the diapers in your diaper bag for long periods. If you are driving, any old bucket with a lid will do. Do your relatives have a bucket you can use so you don’t have to bring it with you? Savannah Rogers suggests you carry an extra plastic bag for soiled diapers. Keeping that bag inside your main waterproof bag gives a double layer between the smell and your traveling companions. Don’t forget a deodorant disk. Danielle Whittaker likes Pail Pals. “I usually leave one in my medium size Bummis tote and when I wash it I take it out and set it aside until the bag is dry.” The deodorant disks also left a fresh scent on everything in her suitcase. Bonus!

• How will you wash the diapers, or WILL you wash the diapers? If you won’t be washing the diapers, try to find space to let them air out to avoid mold. You may want to rinse if you can arrange it. When she had laundry facilities available, Marie DiCocco used “wonderful fitted diapers.” When she didn’t have access to a washing machine, she used prefolds and flat diapers. The diaper “was just as absorbent as a fitted. But the fact that it was thin made it ideal for washing in a sink and hanging up to dry.” If you will wash the diapers, you may want to pack your favorite laundry detergent. Avoid my shock of finding only grandma’s flowery detergent. If you won’t be washing the diapers, try to find liquid even if you normally use powder, just in case the washing machine you find isn’t as efficient as your own.

• How will you dry diapers? If you will need to air-dry diapers, pack clothes pins. If you need to use a laundromat, bring quarters or local coin currency. You can contact your hotel to ask about wash and dry facilities and costs. I took 12 diapers to Europe for a 1-year old and a nighttime-diapered toddler. We had only a tiny European dryer available with less power than my dryer at home, but I washed and dried a load of diapers every morning before we went out. I took only quick dry diapers so they would dry easily in one cycle. I barely noticed the morning’s task.

(Continued on page 6)
On the road (continued from page 5)

Your own situation may be different as you travel, so think through your trip and prepare. Things may not go exactly as expected, so improvise.

The way you travel with cloth diapers will reflect the way you live every day at home. RDA business member Jennifer Moore Temple of Buzzie Bee is planning to take her baby to Guatemala City this spring to sign adoption papers for their newest family member, a 3-year old daughter. She plans to wash all diapers before she leaves Guatemala, then she will give them to the orphanage. That will both lighten the family’s load on the trip back home and help the orphanage, which uses cloth diapers.

Jennifer hopes to continue a relationship with the orphanage, showing her support by sending cloth diapers and other goods.

Let your own experience guide you. Show others how easy and normal cloth diapers are while camping, at grandma’s house, on a road trip, flying overseas, or at a family reunion on the beach. Be your own cloth-diapering self.

Real Diaper Association is the dreamchild of Lori Taylor, who wrote this story. She is Chairperson of the RDA Board of Directors and owner of Fuzbaby and Firefly Diapers.

Article Submissions

As part of our member-supported resource center, Real Diaper Association is building a library of articles relating to cloth diapers. We accept articles consistent with our mission.

What kind of articles are we looking for?

- History of diapering, either a broad sweep or a specific peek into specific experience.
- Science of diapering, including health or environmental studies
- Specific issues in cloth diapering, such as basic care, nighttime diapers, daycare issues, or how to keep costs low.
- Local cloth diapering advocacy. This might include focusing on reaching new parents, supporting those already using cloth, health care professionals, reaching media, or talking to local officials about solid waste issues.

The articles might be aimed at those who are new to cloth diapering or at those who have experience and want to share it with others, but they should be relevant to Real Diaper Association members. Articles will probably be friendly, written for a popular audience, though we will consider other approaches. We encourage articles that ask the reader to act on what they learn.

For more on our submission guidelines, please visit:

http://www.realdiaperassociation.org/article-submissions.php