

## Your Grandmother Should Know: An Oral History of Cloth Diapers

By Lori Taylor

*In each quarterly newsletter during the next year, RDA will publish an article to help you participate in our oral history of cloth diapering, Your Grandmother Should Know.*

### You Only Need to Ask

You know about cloth diapers. Because you are an RDA member, we know you are already one of those people others come to when they have questions about diapers. But, who do you go to when you have questions? We think we have an answer to that question. Your grandmother should know cloth diapers.

We in the era of broad internet support reinvent cloth diapers with every new parent and every baby, but we did not invent cloth diapers or the need they address. As the era of throwaway diapers passes, we can look to see how parents cloth diapered before us. The knowledge of cloth diapers was not lost. There have been women among us all along who know about cloth diapers. You only need to ask them.

We can give depth and history to our own use of cloth diapers by learning about the solutions others found. Granted, the cloth diapers we use on our children in 2006 are seldom like those our mothers or grandmothers used because our diapers are evolving in different economic and environmental realities. We have a greater variety of materials available. We have the collective wisdom of our peers to draw on through the internet. And, we have a much more detailed knowledge of the impact of our diapering choices on environment, economy, and health.

Let's expand that collective wisdom to the history within memory in our own families and neighborhoods. Real Diaper Association has launched the Your Grandmother Should Know

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project to collect interviews and photographs from earlier eras of cloth diapering. We will compile an oral history, use stories and excerpts in RDA educational and promotional materials, and create an archive of cloth diapering experience to draw from in the future.

Let's learn from our grandmothers, then let's spread it around.

### Project Goals

We cannot necessarily anticipate what we will find when we ask about cloth diaper use in the early- to mid-



twentieth century. We ask not because we know but because we don't know. What will our grandmothers say when we ask them, what did you use to diaper your babies and how did you do it?

The goal of the project is to gather Real Stories of Real Babies and to connect our era of cloth diapering with internet support to an earlier era when women told one another face-to-face how to diaper their babies.

1. In the **interviewing process**, we will connect with another generation of cloth diaper users.
2. In the **collection of all interviews**, we will learn the specific details of what they used and how.
3. In the **publicity to follow**, we will discover the recent oral history of cloth diapering and bring attention to cloth diapers by publicity in your community.
4. In the **oral history of cloth diapering**, a fundraising book we intend to compile on the project, we will fund the basic demographic studies on diaper use and environmental studies on diaper impact that are much needed in the U.S.

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# Cynthia's ABCs of Night Diapering

By Cynthia Thompson

When your baby is sleeping 5 or more hours at night or you just want to skip those middle of the night diaper changes, you'll need to think about night time diapering. Night diapering is a special situation. Many disposable diapers can't make it through the night without leaking, but there are cloth solutions that work. However, what works for you during the day probably won't be absorbent, breathable or comfortable enough to last all night.

## Absorbent

Since a night diaper will be changed less frequently than a daytime diaper, it needs to be more absorbent. Most babies can get enough absorption from cotton fibers during the day. At night, many babies need an extra "boost" to get through the night comfortably, and with dry pajamas and bedding. Two fibers are especially good for night diapers: hemp and microfiber. Both of these fabrics are very absorbent and work well together overnight.

You may be able to add a hemp and/or microfiber diaper doubler to a regular fitted diaper you already own and get enough absorbency that way. If that doesn't work for you, one of the easiest ways to get the absorbency you need for overnight is by using pocket diapers. Pocket diapers have an opening to place an absorbent insert inside and you can use as much or as little absorbency as needed. Pocket diapers come in both all-in-one (AIO) style, with the waterproof outer covering attached, and fitted style, which needs a separate cover.

A good overnight insert for a pocket diaper is a microfiber towel folded in thirds, with a hemp doubler wrapped inside. Three layers of microfiber combined with three or more layers of hemp will work overnight for most babies.

## Breathable

Overnight diapers that remain saturated for several hours can develop odors from bacteria that grow when heat and moisture levels rise. A breathable cover lets heat and moisture escape, reducing the chance of odors and rashes. Both wool and polyester fleece make excellent breathable overnight covers. A nylon pull-on cover is also a good choice, since it is more breathable than standard PUL (fabric coated with a waterproof polyurathane laminate). Nylon is not as breathable as fleece or wool, but nylon covers are generally inexpensive, leak-resistant, and wash and dry very quickly. Avoid vinyl covers, as they trap heat and moisture.

Wool has many advantages as a diaper cover, such as its ability to both repel and absorb moisture as needed. Wool is also a natural fiber with anti-bacterial capabilities. A harmless chemical reaction takes place when the lanolin on wool fibers comes in contact with urine, removing odors as the cover dries after use. Wool covers should not be washed every time they are used as this reduces their natural water repellency. Some brands of wool covers are machine washable but most wool benefits from gentle hand washing and occasional lanolin treatments. If you use wool every night, it's best to rotate two or more covers, allowing them to air out thoroughly between uses.

Many people like a pull-on cover for overnight, but a generously cut wrap or side snap covers with hook & loop fasteners or snaps works fine too. Overnight wool covers can be single or double layered, but are generally thicker than a daytime cover in either case. While felted wool is not as stretchy as unfelted jersey or interlock, it is ideally suited for night time covers.

High tech fleece fabrics also make good overnight covers and can

be machine washed and dried. Fleece does not absorb moisture as wool does and it does not naturally remove odors so covers should be washed more frequently. Try airing after one use, but if an odor remains, wash before using again. Fleece dries very quickly, so you may be able to have just one night cover. Having two or more, though, will allow more flexibility with the laundry schedule.

Fleece covers also come in pull-on, wrap, and side snap versions. All work well as long as a heavier and/or more tightly knitted fleece is used. A 300-weight fleece makes a good single layer cover, while a lighter fleece would need two layers. Specialty fleeces can be very water resistant yet fit trimly and are excellent for night use.



Many choices in diapers and fabrics can make nighttime diapering a snap.

If standard pajamas aren't fitting well over your thicker night diaper and cover or you are having trouble with moisture wicking through to cotton pajamas, try using a pair of wool or fleece "longies". These are basically long pants either handknit from wool, or sewn from wool or fleece fabric. Longies can be worn directly over a fitted diaper, replacing both the diaper cover and pajama pants. For a baby or toddler that really soaks her diaper overnight, try layering a wool or fleece cover underneath wool or fleece pants. You can also use wool or fleece pants anytime as a cover, or try them over an AIO diaper if you are having issues with wicking.

## Comfortable

Because your baby will be wearing the same diaper and cover for a long time, comfort is very important. Using both a diaper with appropriate absorbency and a breathable cover will increase your baby's comfort, but you can do more to assure your baby won't wake in the night because his diaper is uncomfortable.

Overnight covers should have a generous cut, since the diaper underneath will probably be thicker than usual and any pinching or binding will be worsened by the fact that the cover is worn for a long time. The diaper underneath should also fit well, especially if you are adding doublers (and bulk) to increase absorbency. You may need to use a larger size than your regular daytime diapers. If you use pocket diapers, you might need to size up also, since you

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# Why I Choose cloth

By Angelique Mullen

Before my daughter was born over four years ago, I had every intention of using cloth diapers. As a frugal, environmentally sensitive person, I thought reusable diapers were the most eco-friendly and cost effective choice on the market. My husband agreed, and we established an order with the local diaper service company, bought a diaper pail and some covers, and waited for our baby to be born.

However, it didn't exactly work out the way I planned. During those first few weeks of our daughter's life, I felt unprepared for the number of diaper changes we would experience. The baby books and the doctors all say that newborns need to be changed ten times a day on average. For us, it felt like twenty times a day! The minute we would change her, she would need to be changed again it seemed. I thought it was easier to diaper our daughter in disposables, since we had been given several packs of them from a friend and we got used to them. With all that we had to remember with respect to baby care, I didn't want to be bothered with cloth diapers during the first few weeks. When my husband finally talked me into putting one on our daughter's bottom, I found it to be too big and bulky, not to mention uncomfortable-looking. The covers didn't fit right, and she leaked. I was turned off. For the first five months, we used cloth only a fraction of the time, at my husband's insistence. When it was my turn to change her diaper, I would always put her back in disposables.

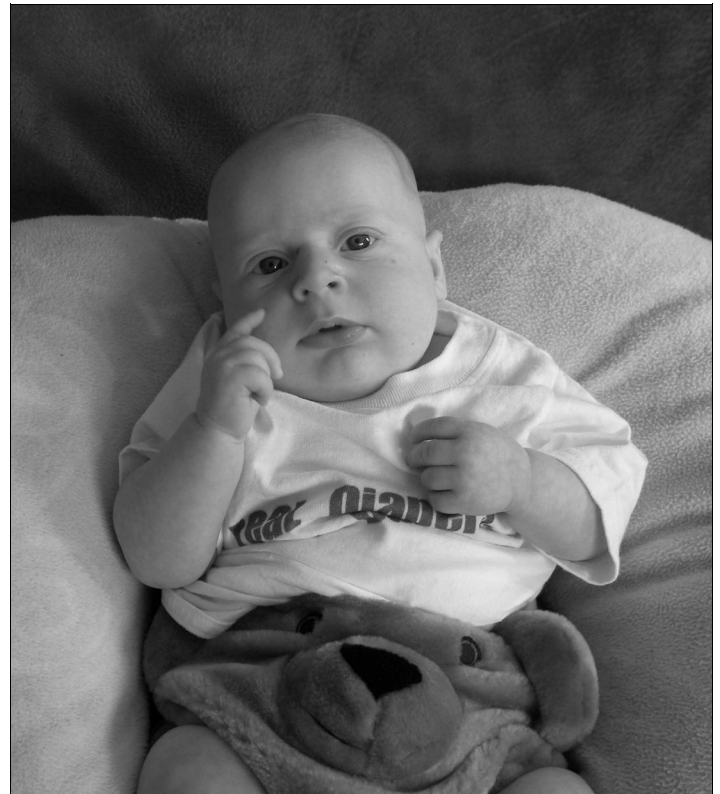
I was secretly disappointed. I had always dreamed of being a natural mama - using cloth diapers, exclusively breastfeeding, co-sleeping, and making my own baby food. I didn't believe in playpens, junk food, and toxic chemicals in the home. Still, I felt like a failure. Reusing and recycling are important to me, and diapering with cloth seemed like such a loving thing to do for the planet and my baby. It was hard for me to fail at cloth diapering because it was like I had given in to the consumerist culture I had always despised. Although I was elated to be a new mother, I started to feel like I had lost touch with a part of myself.

When my daughter was five months old, it all changed for me. It was getting ridiculous paying for the diaper service while only using a small portion of the diapers we received every week. In the meantime, we were buying and throwing away a lot of disposables. My husband really wanted us to use cloth, but he tried to talk me into canceling the diaper service to save money since we were paying for both. I didn't like this idea because I wasn't ready to give up on cloth, although I knew something had to change.

It was at this time that I attended a Friday parenting workshop when I came across a woman who embodied what I wanted to be as a mother. She sat on the floor quietly nursing her baby. She wore a sling, and carried a diaper bag stuffed with cloth diapers. I asked her about cloth diapering, and the adorable wrap that covered her son's bottom. It was a cute print wrap with yellow and blue whales, and it didn't look uncomfortable at all. We talked for a little while. She ended up giving me a cloth diaper pep talk. She told me that she thought disposables leaked way more than cloth, that it was all in the way you secure the cloth diaper and how snug you wrap the cover. She explained that Snappis were easier than pins, and that shaking poop off a diaper was no big deal. She encouraged me not to be afraid of bulk. She also told me where to buy good wraps and diapering supplies online. This woman seemed so easy-going and relaxed, and there was a happy confidence about her that inspired me.

That night, I decided I had to get used to cloth diapering, if not for the Earth than for myself. I had to know that I was capable of sacrificing convenience for the common good. I made a pact with

myself that I would use nothing but cloth for that entire weekend, even when we were out and about. It was such a success, that we began cloth diapering full-time and never looked back. There have been no regrets. In fact, we eventually gave up the service to buy our own diapers and, four years later, we are now diapering our new son in cloth.



Even wrapped in a teddy bear cover, Henry Mullen, the author's two month old son, agrees that cloth is the best for his tiny bottom.

Several months after this encounter, a friend and I were discussing the environmental issues of diapering. My friend, who used disposable diapers on her daughter, said, "I've heard that there really is no difference between cloth and disposable as far as the environment goes, so you might as well go with the more convenient." Even though I knew instinctively that she was wrong, that cloth diapers were better for the environment than throwaway diapers, I didn't know what to say because I had no facts to back me up. This led to some late night research on the Internet by me and a self-proclaimed "Diaper Diatribe" that I wrote for our family's website. What I found out about diapers surprised me, and as my research grew, I became more passionate about the issue. This eventually led me to seek out the other founders of Real Diaper Association.

There are many reasons why cloth is a better choice for baby's bottoms and why we have chosen to diaper our children in cloth. Most of you are familiar with these reasons. For one, it is so much more soft and pure than plastic-paper diapers as cloth does not contain sodium polyacrylate (SAP), a type of super absorbent polymer, which becomes a gel-like substance when wet. A similar substance had been used in super-absorbent tampons until the early 1980s when it was revealed that the material increased the risk of toxic shock syndrome. Because SAP wicks moisture away from baby's skin, parents think their babies are dry, when in fact

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# RDA Business Member Directory

## Arizona

Wildflower Diapers  
Shannon Doan  
www.wildflowerdiapers.com  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
(888) 677-3228 toll free

Bitty Bums  
Heather Scheirmann  
www.bittybums.com  
Peoria, Arizona  
(623) 792-8675

## California

Blue Penguin  
Carol Stewart  
www.bluepenguin.biz  
Los Angeles, California  
(888) 422-2945 toll free  
(323) 344-1311 fax

Granola Mamas  
Nikki Burns & Heidi Guthrie  
www.granolamoms.com  
El Cajon, California 92020  
(619) 444-6298

## Colorado

Righteous Baby  
Ann Hall  
www.righteousbaby.com  
Lyons, Colorado  
(303) 823-5980

## Connecticut

Papaya Patch.com  
Cari Wolverton  
www.papayapatch.com  
West Hartford, Connecticut  
(800) 521-0701 toll-free  
(860) 521-0731 fax

## Florida

Heavenly Hineys  
Felisa Leppo  
www.heavenlyhineys.com  
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida  
(321) 985-6707  
(321) 693-5983 fax

Sunshine Diapers  
Brenda Wells  
www.sunshinediapers.com  
Gainesville, Florida  
(352) 335-2093

## Illinois

Comfy Baby  
Mika Kern  
www.comfybaby.net  
Island Lake, Illinois  
(888) 255-7117 toll-free  
(206) 666-7335 fax

## Iowa

Cash For Diapers  
Tamara Sanders  
www.cashfordiapers.com  
Sioux City, Iowa  
(712) 258-1249

## Maine

Buzzie Bee  
Jennifer Moore Temple  
www.buzziebee.com  
Rockland, Maine  
(207) 542-0505

Kelly's Closet  
Kelly Wels  
www.kellyscloset.com  
Waterford, Maine  
(888) 701-7015

Maine Cloth Diaper Company  
Christy Perce  
www.mainecllothdiapercompany.com  
Newcastle, Maine  
(866) 586-MCDC toll-free  
(207) 586-5974

## Maryland

Alyahs Alternative  
Shayla Boyd-Gill  
www.alyahs.com  
Bowie, Maryland  
(866) 755-7977 toll-free

## Minnesota

The Natural Life Store  
Kristine Higginbotham  
www.thenaturallifestore.com  
Coon Rapids, Minnesota  
(763) 439-2026

## New Jersey

DiaperPin  
Jennifer Liptrot  
www.diaperpin.com  
Oldwick, New Jersey  
(908) 872 4407

## North Carolina

Natural Baby Supply  
Jean van Zyl  
www.naturalbabysupply.com  
Hillsborough, North Carolina  
(919) 338-1861

## Ohio

Time For A Change  
Nicole Cameron  
www.time-for-a-change.org  
Stow, Ohio  
(866) 229-8797 toll-free

## Oregon

Granny's Ark  
Julie Claunch  
www.grannysark.com  
Beaverton, Oregon  
(971) 533-9699

Zoom Baby Gear  
Cynthia Thompson  
www.zoombabygear.com  
Beaverton, Oregon  
(503) 978-0972

## Rhode Island

A.F.E.W. Natural Changes  
Stacey Grant  
www.afewnaturalchanges.com  
Smithfield, Rhode Island  
(401) 233-1895

## Utah

Firefly Diapers  
Lori Taylor  
www.fireflydiapers.com  
South Jordan, Utah  
(800) 597-0561 toll-free

Fuzbaby Diapers  
Lori Taylor  
www.fuzbaby.com  
South Jordan, Utah  
(800) 597-0561 toll-free

## Vermont

Green Mountain Diapers  
Karen Amidon  
greenmountaindiapers.com  
Vernon, Vermont  
(802) 254-7361  
(800) 330-9905 fax

## Virginia

PM Organics  
Marie DiCocco  
www.pmorganics.com  
Alexandria, Virginia  
(703) 627-1512

## Washington

Baby Diaper Service  
Mark Stief  
www.seattlediaper.com  
Seattle, Washington  
(800) 562-BABY toll-free  
(206) 767-0179 fax

*This list is current as of  
June 10, 2006*



## Accredited Real diaper Circle leaders

### Maine

Christy Perce  
Newcastle, Maine  
Thepercefam@earthlink.net

### New York

Melissa Corbett  
New York, NY  
macorbett@mac.com

### Oregon

Cynthia Thompson  
Portland, OR  
fredncyn@earthlink.net

### Tennessee

Danielle Whittaker  
Antioch, Tennessee  
mrsdaniellewhittaker@yahoo.com

### Utah

Amanda Rathbun  
Provo, Utah  
Acrathbun@hotmail.com

### Washington

Maya Keithly  
Everett, Washington  
www.oceanasoul.com/rda.htm  
realdiapers@gmail.com

Marie Walter  
Redmond, Washington  
mariewalter@gmail.com

## A real diaper circle moment ...



Participants engaging in some diaper sewing fun at an RDA Circle meeting in Everett, Washington, June 10, 2006.

To see complete descriptions of our business members and Circle Leaders, go to:  
[Http://www.realdiaperassociation.org/directory](http://www.realdiaperassociation.org/directory)

## Goodbye ....

We are terribly saddened to let RDA members know that Heather Sanders has left RDA. Heather has been an active advocate for cloth diapers for many years. She was one of the original founders of RDA who gave more than 1000 hours over the past several years to build the organization.

Knowing that her jobs with RDA would have to be covered to keep the organization running smoothly, Heather gave us one year's notice. The rest of the RDA Board have added her tasks to our own. In the future, you may contact us about the following:

Marie DiCocco, webmaster, [marie@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:marie@realdiaperassociation.org);  
Lori Taylor, e-newsletter editor, [lori@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:lori@realdiaperassociation.org);  
Angelique Mullen, membership liason, [angelique@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:angelique@realdiaperassociation.org); and Maya Keithly, Secretary of the Board, [maya@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:maya@realdiaperassociation.org).

If you would like to volunteer your time and skills for cloth diaper advocacy through RDA, please contact Chair of the Board of Real Diaper Association, Lori Taylor, [lori@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:lori@realdiaperassociation.org). We welcome your help in RDA and in your local community as a Real Diaper Circle Leader.



Heather Sanders has moved on to work full time with her small business web hosting company, Very Commerce. If you would like to thank Heather for her work with RDA, please contact her at [heather@verycommerce.com](mailto:heather@verycommerce.com).

## Nighttime diapering (Continued from page 2)

will be using more/thicker inserts. If at all possible, try to have covers and diapers that are reserved for nighttime use. Using a wicking fabric inside the diaper, such as a top layer on a doubler, or a lay-in liner, will also increase comfort. Polyester wicking fabrics such as microfleece and suedecloth pull moisture away from your baby's skin, keeping them drier and more comfortable. Natural fabrics such as silk and velour also have a wicking effect, though not as pronounced as polyester fibers.

Some parents who exclusively use prefold diapers during the day will double-diaper with them overnight. While you can increase absorbency with this method, some people find the resulting diaper bulky, and are concerned about it not being very comfortable for a baby. You can increase comfort in a doubled prefold diaper by using a fleece liner to wick away moisture and a breathable cover to reduce heat build-up. To reduce bulk, replace one of the cotton prefolds with a hemp prefold or flat. Even better, have a couple fitted diapers or AIOs as previously described that are reserved for night time use.

As with all diapering solutions, individual results will vary based on how long your baby sleeps and in what position, whether you are night nursing, etc. Experiment with hemp, microfiber, wool & fleece and you will find what works for your family. You can have a dry, cozy baby and bed all night long! ♦

This is one business member's advice for nighttime diapering, but as we know, there are many ways to diaper your baby. We would love to hear what you do with regards to diapering at night. Please send any stories, anecdotes, methods, or advice and we will print it in the next issue. Mail to [publications@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:publications@realdiaperassociation.org).

*Cynthia Thompson is a newly accredited RDA Circle leader in Portland, Oregon. She is the owner of Zoom Baby Gear, an online store selling cloth diapers and children's products. She lives in Portland with her husband of 14 years and her three-year old daughter.*

## Your grandmother (Continued from page 1)

### Your Role

You and other RDA members will interview your grandmothers, neighbors, great aunts, mothers, and anyone else who can tell you how they, their parents, and their grandparents diapered their babies.

Using the detailed Project Guidelines, you can plan and carry out an interview that will become part of a larger collection. A printed copy of the Project Guidelines is available to every Real Diaper Association member, and anyone may download a copy on the RDA web site at [<http://realdiaperassociation.org/Your-Grandmother-Should-Know/>].

For support and motivation, we suggest that you gather members of your Real Diaper Circle, friends, or family to help you with the project, but you are welcome to set out alone to find and interview those who know about cloth diapers.

### Oh Yes You Can!

RDA has provided a carefully detailed guide to help you every step of the way as you prepare your plan, record an interview with your grandmother, and document your interview to make it useful to those who will listen to it in the future. Use the Getting Started guide online or follow the steps in the Project Guidelines book

1. Read about the project
2. Make a plan to participate
3. Find local support
4. Arrange an interview
5. Gather your equipment
6. Interview your grandmother (or someone else)
7. Organize your interview materials and send them
8. Seek publicity by telling everyone what you have done

In this first of four articles on the project, we encourage you to read about the project and make your own plan to participate. We have created a Project Plan form to help you keep track of what you will do. This is available as part of the Project Guidelines or by separate download on the RDA website in .pdf or MS Word .doc formats. Once you decide who to interview, you will probably want

to do some research on the time period when she diapered her babies. You will also find a Research Log to help you track what you find. When you plan is ready, share it with the Project Manager so she can offer help and support. You will find more details on each of these steps in the Project Guidelines.

In our next article, we will cover preparation and interviewing. In the meantime, prepare to join in this great project and learn more about cloth diapering. Your grandmother should know.

### Project Manager

Lori Taylor is the Founder as well as the current Chair of the Board of Directors of Real Diaper Association. Before she jumped into the cloth diaper industry in 2000 as a manufacturer and retailer, Lori earned a doctorate in American Studies. Lori also has graduate training in Folklore and Oral History. She worked for the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage as an archivist, and she has also worked on many oral history and folklife projects. Lori has determined from the beginning that Real Diaper Association would draw on the existing knowledge of cloth diapers to inform contemporary diapering. The Your Grandmother Should Know project is one of the major educational projects Lori has planned to create a solid foundation in RDA's first five years.

Read more about the project and download Project Guidelines from the RDA website. <http://realdiaperassociation.org/Your-Grandmother-Should-Know/>

For more information, contact Lori at [YGSK@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:YGSK@realdiaperassociation.org). ♦

## Choosing cloth (continued from page 3)

they are sitting in urine. The urine is still in the disposable, as it would be in cloth, but in a gel-like form. So instead of a wet cotton diaper, they get a thick heavy disposable. Sitting in urine too long can cause bacteria growth, which can then lead to diaper rash. Newborns should be changed every hour and older babies every 3-4 hours, no matter what kind of diaper they are wearing. When we put our son in cloth, we know when he is wet, which means we change him before he develops skin irritation on his bottom.

By choosing cloth, we are avoiding an extremely toxic by-product of the paper-bleaching process that has been found in disposable diapers - dioxin. It is a carcinogenic chemical, listed by the EPA as the most toxic of all cancer-linked chemicals. It is banned in most countries, but not the U.S.

We also choose cloth because of its obvious environmental benefits. Cloth diapering is the ultimate form of recycling, yet many parents like my friend are under the impression that cloth is no better than disposables. That is simply not true. In 1988, nearly \$300 million dollars were spent annually just to discard disposable diapers, whereas cotton diapers are reused 50 to 200 times before being turned into rags. And this was almost twenty years ago! No one knows how long it takes for a disposable diaper to decompose, but it is estimated to be about 250-500 years, long after your children, grandchildren and great, great, great grandchildren will be gone. Disposable diapers are the third largest single consumer item in landfills, and represent about 4% of solid waste. In a house with a child in diapers, disposables make up 50% of household waste.

One of the things I had to set my friend straight about during our lunch was that cloth diapers are not equally wasteful, a falsehood perpetuated by disposable diaper companies. The fact is, throwaway diapers generate sixty times more solid waste and use twenty times more raw materials, like crude oil and wood pulp. The manufacture and use of disposable diapers amounts to 2.3 times more water wasted than cloth. Over 300 pounds of wood, 50 pounds of petroleum feedstocks and 20 pounds of chlorine are used to produce disposable diapers for one baby each year.

We recently had a baby boy who was born very small (less than 6 pounds). Although we brought newborn-sized prefold diapers to the hospital, they were much too large for his tiny frame. Instead of getting discouraged, I looked at our diaper stash and decided to get creative. At the suggestion of another RDA member, I decided to diaper my son in cheap washcloths while he was still little enough. I also cut up a few of my daughter's old large prefolds. Since I only had a few covers that fit over these, I would often have him coverless. This worked like a charm and it was only a matter of days before the washcloths were too small. Now, at nine weeks, my rapidly growing son has outgrown even the newborn prefolds and is now wearing infant sizes, along with all kinds of fitteds and pocket diapers.

New parents today face a challenge when they decide to cloth diaper their new baby. A decade ago, diaper services were more common and it was easier to buy covers and supplies at local stores. Today, the prices of the remaining diaper services have risen because the companies often have a wider area of delivery, a result of other services going out of business. For me, the cost of diapering with a service versus using disposables was about the same, which is why we eventually decided to wash diapers

ourselves. However, the diaper services are wonderful because they are very convenient, and they do the "dirty work" for you. It is sad that many areas of the country do not have services that deliver anymore. The only way for people in those areas to cloth diaper is to wash their own, a task many people are not willing to undergo.

As a society, our attitudes about diapering have changed. Even our language has changed, as it seems that people now refer to disposables as "normal" diapers. People are also afraid of the poop factor. I have experienced this personally with some of the mothers I encounter on the playground. So many of them look at me in shock when they find out that I wash my baby's diapers. They ask me, in all seriousness, "What do you do with the poop?" I try to explain that it really isn't a big deal, that I just shake it over, or sometimes dunk it in the toilet, then throw the diaper in a dry pail, and wash the diapers every couple of days. I explain that mothers have been diapering with cloth for many generations and our own mothers used cloth. However, these moms seem horrified at the thought of having to interact in any possible way with their child's feces. To me and the others like yourselves who cloth diaper, this is just part of life. It seems to me that if the mother isn't willing to do the dirty work, no one will. The time has come for families to become educated.

Every month, families across the world are throwing hundreds of disposable diapers away. At the same time older children are being taught in school to take care of the Earth. Being a parent can be exhausting, and the thought of cloth diapering can be overwhelming to someone not used to the idea. To some, like the mothers I encounter at the playground, it seems "yucky". However, we know that the personal choices of the public are creating this problem. The only way people are going to change is through education about their diapering choices.

We make choices in everything we buy and consume. Almost every product we purchase and bring into our lives will have some impact on the environment of our planet. We need to determine which products are less harmful. These days, parents can choose to use disposable bibs, changing mats, wipes, and plastic mats that lay down on a restaurant table. It seems sanitary, but where do these items go when they are thrown away after only one use? They end up in a landfill that gets more and more crowded. By keeping these things in our minds, we start to realize everything is a choice. Diapering is also a choice. As someone who struggled to make this choice, I can tell you unequivocally that it is one I do not regret. No doubt many of you did not struggle the way I did. Some of you might find my early struggle perplexing because cloth diapering came naturally to you. Regardless of how we got here, it is now up to us to educate other parents. Like the mother who inspired and encouraged me to use cloth, we can be that support for other struggling parents. The words of Mohandas Gandhi are just as true today as they were seventy years ago. We must be the change we wish to see in the world. ♦

*Angelique Mullen is a mother, an RDA founder and activist, and a former school teacher. She lives in Daly City, California with her husband, four year-old daughter, and two-month old son.*

## NATIONAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Real Diaper Association  
P.O. Box 156887  
San Francisco, CA 94115

<http://www.realdiaperassociation.org>  
Email: [publications@realdiaperassociation.org](mailto:publications@realdiaperassociation.org)

**real  
Diaper  
association**

*Real Diapers for Real Babies*

# Real Diaper giveaway and real diaper events blog

Good news! We have extended yet another venue to talk and learn about cloth diapers: our blog, [www.realdiaperevents.org](http://www.realdiaperevents.org). At this site, current RDA members can connect with online cloth diaper users both inside and way beyond the boundaries of their local communities.

What events can be listed? Just about anything related to cloth diapers! Circle leaders can post information about their meetings. RDA members can write about their local cloth diapering classes, fairs or other events featuring a local cloth diaper vendor or informational booth. You can also share YOUR cloth diapering testimonials, post about something cloth-related that you might have read about in the news, and discuss any kind of advocacy tip you might have. The best news is that this blog is free to use for any current RDA member.

What is a blog? For those not familiar with the word 'blog' - a blog is a web log; an online, interactive journal where likeminded community members can come post (*enter information and submit it for online publication*) and comment (*enter a response to a post, submitting it for online publication*) on our main subject matter, cloth diapers.

We consider the blog to be a natural, yet dynamic extension of our main website, [www.realdiaperassociation.org](http://www.realdiaperassociation.org).

Associated with the blog is our Real Diaper Giveaway program. We started this as a way to get more cloth diapers on the babies that need them. The process involves four steps. First, we accept

advertising on the RDA website and RDEvents.org blog, which will fund the program.

Second, RDA members nominate families and organizations who need cloth diapers. Very often, people with little money are deterred from using cloth because of the high startup costs. The giveaway program can help those families in need.

The third stage of the program involves electing a family or organization from the nominations by member vote.

Finally, RDA uses the advertising funds to purchase basic diapering supplies for the family or organization selected. This is an ongoing process.

The Real Diaper Giveaway program is excellent publicity for RDA Circles as well as business and individual RDA members seeking local publicity for cloth diapers through stories of their charitable giving.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.realdiaperevents.org/>