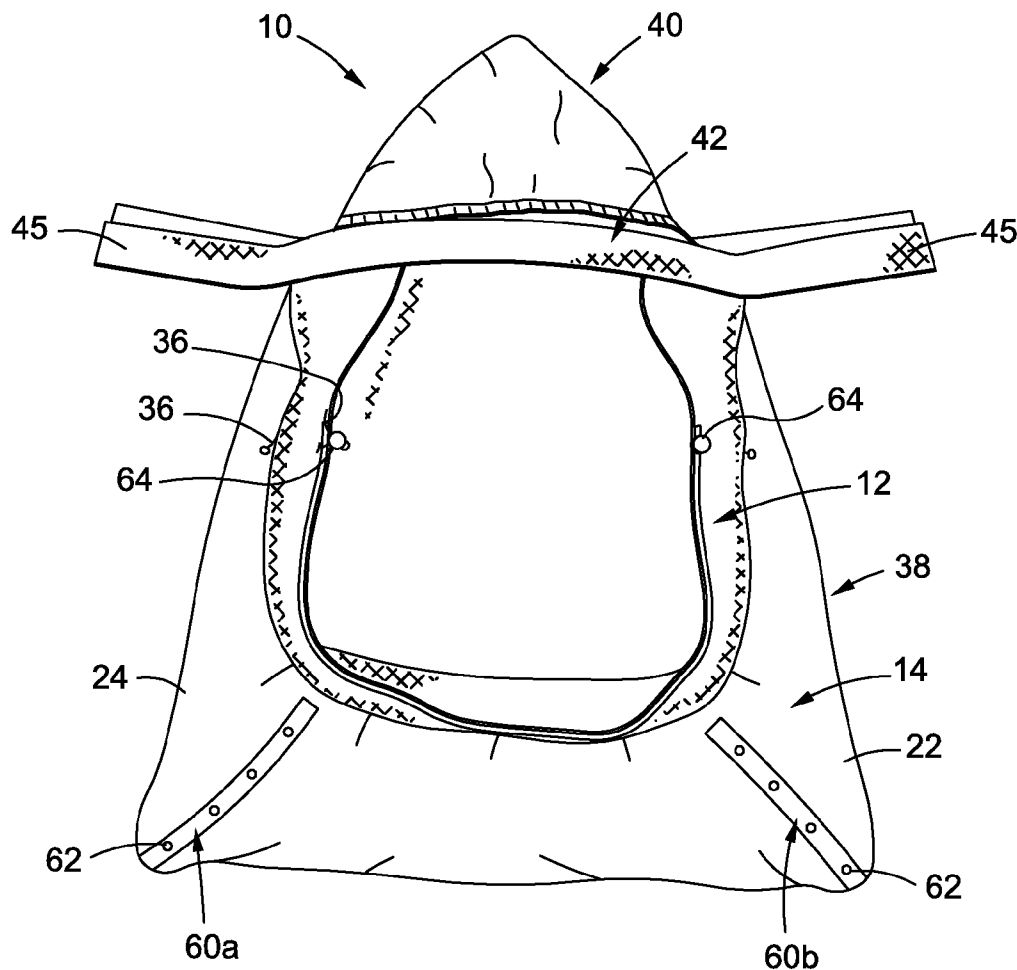




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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Zack(10) **Pub. No.: US 2012/0266350 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 25, 2012**(54) **UNIVERSAL RAIN AND COOL WEATHER
CARRIER COVER**(52) **U.S. Cl. 2/84; 2/69**(76) **Inventor: Elizabeth Zack, Brooklyn, NY
(US)**(21) **Appl. No.: 13/455,968**(22) **Filed: Apr. 25, 2012****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) **Provisional application No. 61/478,812, filed on Apr.
25, 2011.****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
A41D 11/00 (2006.01)
A41D 3/00 (2006.01)(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided is a universal cover for an infant carrier, wherein the cover is configured to provide warmth and/or protection from precipitation, such as rain, snow, etc. The cover includes a cape portion which may be draped over the infant seat of the infant carrier. The inside of the cape portion includes a strip of fabric at the peripheral edge thereof to form a peripheral pocket on the cape. The lower end of the pocket may be configured to receive the infant's feet/legs while the infant is seated within the carrier. The cover additionally includes a connector strip including a pair of lateral end portion which may be wrapped around respective shoulder strap(s) of the infant carrier to secure the cover to the infant carrier.



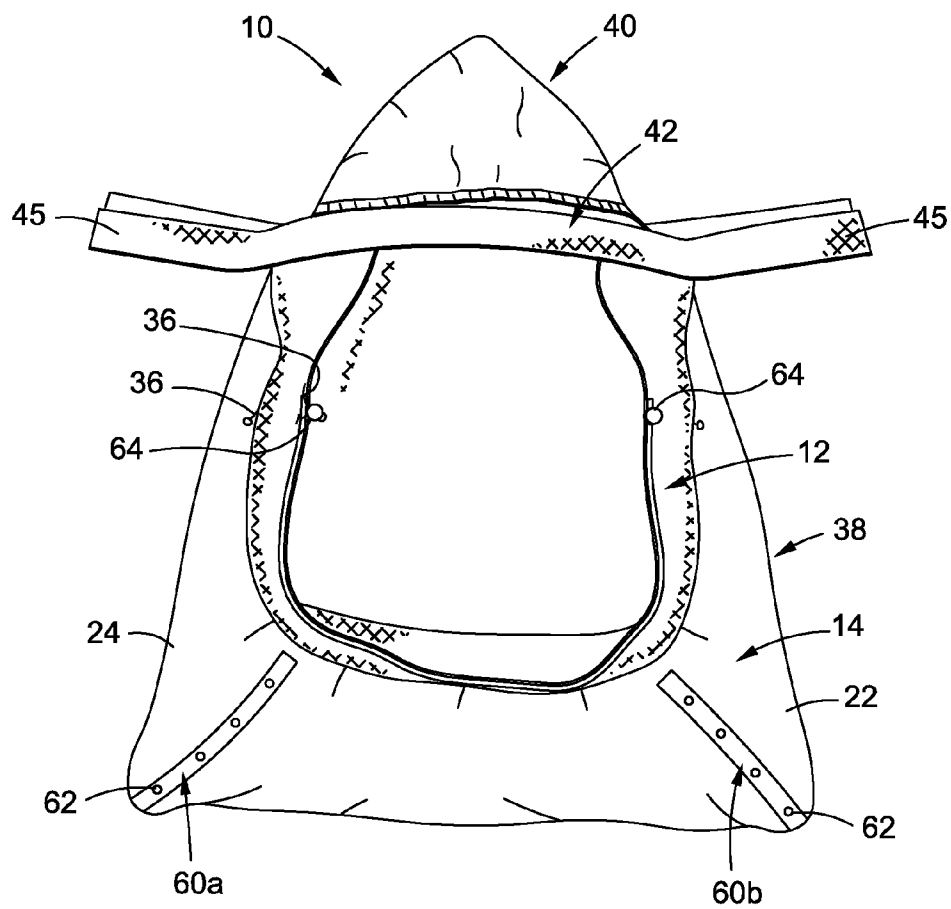


FIG. 1

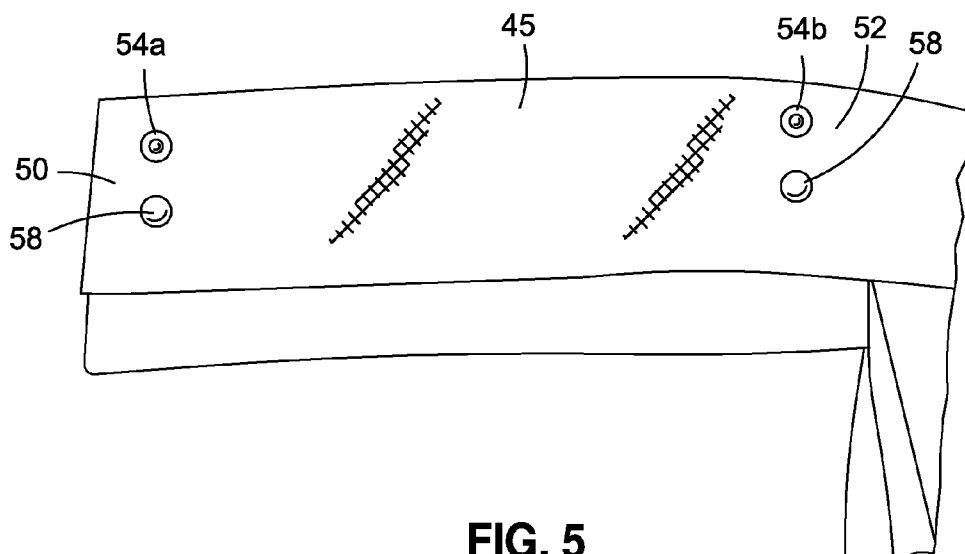


FIG. 5

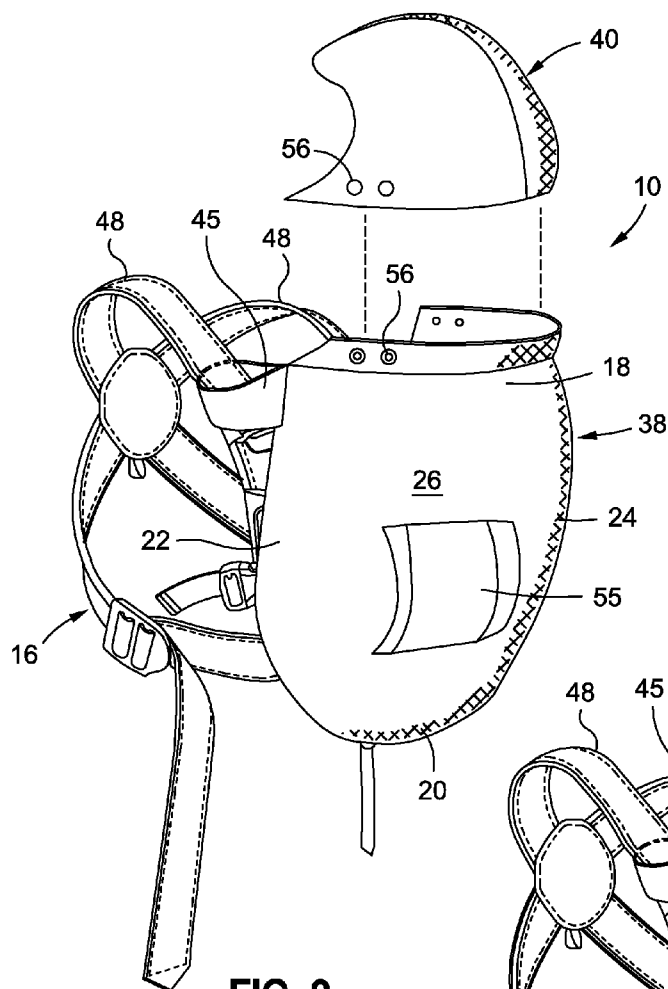


FIG. 2

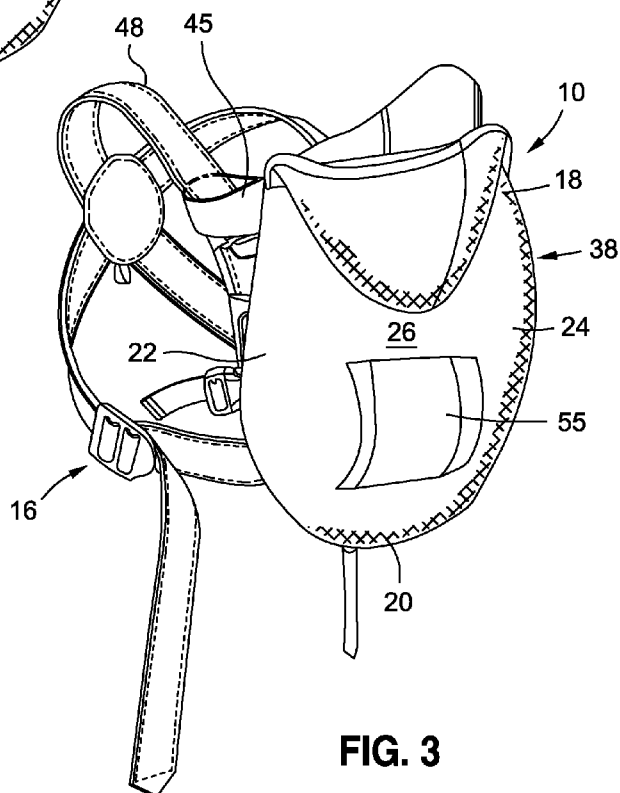


FIG. 3

FIG. 4A

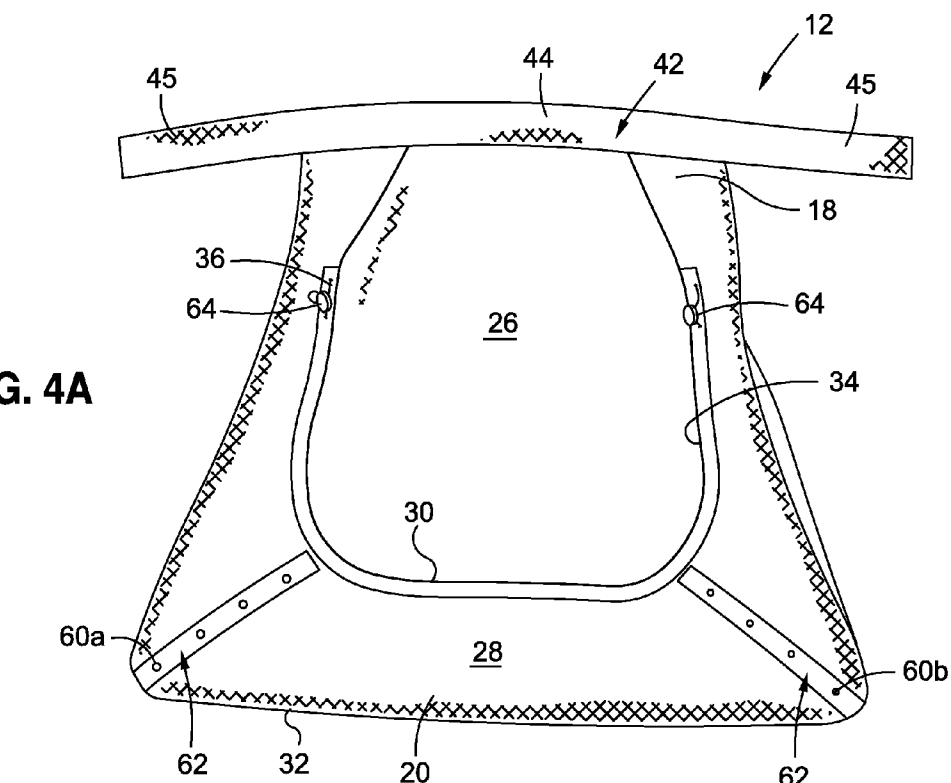
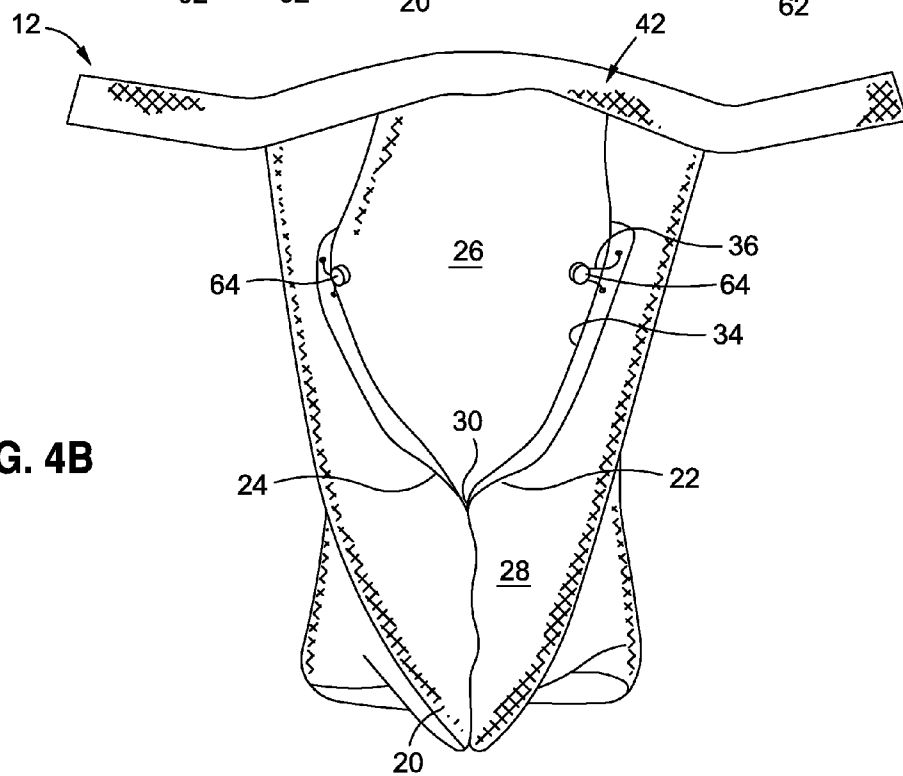


FIG. 4B



UNIVERSAL RAIN AND COOL WEATHER CARRIER COVER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/478,812, filed Apr. 25, 2011, entitled UNIVERSAL RAIN AND COOL WEATHER CARRIER COVER.

STATEMENT RE: FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] 1. Technical Field

[0004] The present disclosure relates generally to covers for infant carrying and support devices. More particularly, the present disclosure relates to a universal cover for an infant carrier for protecting the infant from precipitation and/or cool weather.

[0005] 2. Related Art

[0006] Infant carriers are well known in the art and consequently, there are a number of basic configurations for infant carriers suitable for on-the-body carry, including slings, wraps, and shoulder strap carriers. Though simpler in construction, slings and wraps are not as popular as infant carriers that incorporate shoulder straps, due in part to the difficulty associated with proper wear. Among infant carriers with shoulder straps, there are those with frames fashioned after conventional backpacks. Accordingly, such framed carriers typically support the child on the back of the wearer. Also, there are frameless or soft-sided carriers that support the child on the front or chest of the wearer, as well as those that support the child on the hip of the wearer.

[0007] There are a number of positions and orientations in which the child may be carried, each being appropriate for different circumstances. For example, where there is a need for increased monitoring, the child may be carried on the front of, and facing backwards to, the parent or caregiver. Further, while moving about, completing errands, or otherwise participating in activity that takes the child out of the home, a greater degree of interaction with the surrounding environment may be offered by carrying the child in the front of, and facing forward along the same perspective as, the parent or caregiver.

[0008] In view of the aforementioned benefits of infant carriers, such carriers are widely used when the parent and child are spending time outside. For instance, the parent and child may be outside enjoying a walk through the park, shopping, exercising, etc.

[0009] A common concern with using the infant carrier in outside environments is shielding the infant from the elements, particularly cold weather and precipitation. The weather may change quickly and the parent may not have time to change the child's clothes to suit the changing weather. Furthermore, if the child is wrapped in bulky clothes to keep the infant warm and dry, the infant may no longer comfortably fit within the infant carrier.

[0010] Accordingly, there is a need in the art for a device that may be used with existing infant carriers to shield and protect an infant from cool weather and precipitation.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention specifically addresses and alleviates the above-identified deficiencies in the art. There is provided a universal cover for an infant carrier, wherein the cover is configured to provide warmth and/or protection from precipitation, such as rain, snow, etc. The cover includes a cape portion which may be draped over the infant seat of the infant carrier. The inside of the cape portion includes a strip of fabric at the peripheral edge thereof to form a peripheral pocket on the cape. The lower end of the pocket may be configured to receive the infant's feet/legs while the infant is seated within the carrier. The cover additionally includes a connector strip including a pair of lateral end portions which may be wrapped around respective shoulder strap(s) of the infant carrier. When the lateral end portions are wrapped around the shoulder straps(s), the upper end portion of the cover is secured to the carrier. Furthermore, the insertion of the infant's legs/feet into the foot pocket maintains the lower portion of the cover in place.

[0012] The cover may be comprised of a warming shell to provide warmth to the infant. The cover may also be comprised of a rain shell to protect the infant from rain or other precipitation. The warming shell and rain shell may be used separately or in combination with each other to provide warm and precipitation protection to the infant. Along these lines, the warming shell and rain shell may include cooperative mechanical fasteners to secure the warming shell and rain shell together. Furthermore, the warming shell may be configured to be disposed within the rain shell to define a nested configuration when the two shells are used in combination with each other.

[0013] The cover may additionally include several features which enhance the adaptability of the cover. For instance, the cover may include a drawstring disposed within a drawstring channel adjacent the inner edge of the inner panel to allow a parent to cinch the cover to the infant carrier. The cover may also include adjustment fasteners adjacent the second end portion of the cover to adjust the foot pocket to accommodate different carrier shapes and sizes, suit the size of the infant, as well as the position of the infant relative to the parent (i.e., straddling or legs hanging down).

[0014] It is additionally contemplated that the cover may include a hood that is selectively attachable to the cape portion to provide protection to the infant's head when the infant is seated within the carrier.

[0015] The present invention is best understood by reference to the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] These as well as other features of the present invention will become more apparent upon reference to the drawings wherein:

[0017] FIG. 1 is a front view of a universal carrier cover including a warming shell nested within a rain shell;

[0018] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the universal carrier cover connected to an infant carrier, the carrier cover including a hood in an upright position;

[0019] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the universal carrier cover shown in FIG. 2, with the hood in a collapsed position;

[0020] FIG. 4A is a front view of the warming shell in an expanded configuration;

[0021] FIG. 4B is a front view of the warming shell in a contracted configuration; and

[0022] FIG. 5 is an enlarged front view of an end portion of the connector strip.

[0023] Common reference numerals are used throughout the drawings and detailed description to indicate like elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] The detailed description set forth below is intended as a description of the presently preferred embodiment of the invention, and is not intended to represent the only form in which the present invention may be constructed or utilized. The description sets forth the functions and sequences of steps for constructing and operating the invention. It is to be understood, however, that the same or equivalent functions and sequences may be accomplished by different embodiments and that they are also intended to be encompassed within the scope of the invention.

[0025] Referring to FIG. 1, there is shown a universal carrier cover 10 for use with an infant carrier to provide warmth and/or to protect the infant seated within the carrier from the natural elements, such as rain, wind, snow, etc. The carrier cover 10 is adapted to be used with most infant carriers by easily attaching to the shoulder strap(s) or harness of the infant carrier. As will be described in more detail below, the carrier cover depicted in FIG. 1 includes a warming shell 12 and a rain shell 14, which may be used in combination with each other (as shown in FIG. 1), or separately, as desired by the parent to suit the current weather conditions.

[0026] Referring now to FIGS. 2-3, the universal carrier cover 10 is shown attached to an infant carrier 16. The cover 10 includes a first, upper end portion 18, a second lower end portion 20, a first lateral portion 22, and a second lateral portion 24. The cover 10 additionally includes an outer panel 26 and an inner panel 28 (See FIG. 4A) which collectively define a peripheral foot pocket 30 adjacent the second end portion 20, wherein the foot pocket 30 is configured to receive the infant's feet/legs. The inner panel 28 is coupled to the peripheral edge 32 of the outer panel 26. The inner panel 28 extends partially inwardly from the peripheral edge 32 to define an inner edge 34. In this regard, the inner panel 28 only partially overlaps with the outer panel 26. A drawstring channel is disposed adjacent the inner edge 34 of the inner panel 28 and is configured to receive a drawstring 36 (See FIG. 4A). The drawstring 36 is used to cinch the inner edge 34 around the infant carrier 16 to adapt the size of the cover 10 to the particular size and contour of the carrier 16, as well as the size of the child seated within the carrier 10. This feature provides enhanced adaptability to allow the cover 10 to be used with carriers 16 that vary in size, as well as children that vary in size.

[0027] Referring now to FIG. 4A, the cover 10 additionally includes a connector strip 42 adjacent the first upper end portion 18 thereof. The connector strip 42 includes a medial portion 44 and a pair of lateral portions 45 disposed on opposed ends of the medial portion 44. FIGS. 1 and 4A show the connector strip 42 in an extended configuration, with the medial portion 44 and lateral portions 45 being disposed in

substantially co-planar relation to each other and the lateral portions 45 extending laterally outward from the medial portion 44.

[0028] The lateral portions 45 are configured to connect the cover 10 to the infant carrier 16. In the embodiment depicted in the drawings, the lateral portion 45 is configured to wrap around the shoulder straps 48 of the infant carrier 16 to secure the cover 10 to the carrier 16. Referring specifically to FIG. 5, there is shown an enlarged view of a lateral portion 45 of the connector strip 42. The lateral portion 45 includes a distal end portion 50 and a middle end portion 52. Cooperative mechanical fasteners 54a and 54b are disposed at respective end portions 50, 52 of the lateral portion 45 to allow the lateral portion 45 to wrap around a shoulder strap 48 of the carrier 10 and to connect to itself. In particular, a female mechanical fastener 54a is disposed adjacent the distal end portion 50 and a corresponding male mechanical fastener 54b is disposed adjacent the middle end portion 52. The distal end portion 50 is wrapped around the shoulder strap 48 to bring the female mechanical fastener 54a into engageable alignment with the male mechanical fastener 54b. The female mechanical fastener 54a is then engaged with the male mechanical fastener 54b to secure the lateral portion 45 to the shoulder strap 48, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. To disconnect the cover 10 from the carrier 10, the mechanical fasteners 54a, 54b are disengaged and the lateral portion 45 is removed from the shoulder strap 48. The configuration of the connector strip 42 allows the cover 10 to be selectively attached to a wide range of infant carriers 10 or infant slings.

[0029] Referring now specifically to FIG. 2, the cover 10 may include a cape portion 38 and a hood 40 selectively connectable to the cape portion 38. The cape portion 38 is comprised of the inner panel 28, the outer panel 26 and the connector strip 42. The cape portion 38 and hood 40 each include cooperatively engageable mechanical fasteners 56 for connecting the hood 40 to the cape portion 38. When the hood 40 is connected to the cape portion 38, the hood 40 may be transitioned relative to the cape portion 38 between a deployed position (See FIG. 2) to place the hood 40 over the child's head, and a collapsed position (see FIG. 3) to uncover the child's head.

[0030] As mentioned above, the cover 10 described above may be formed from a warming shell 12, a rain shell 14, or a combination of the warming (inner) shell 12 and the rain (outer) shell 14. In this regard, the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 are each configured to be used separately. In addition, the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 are also configured to be used in combination with each other. Along these lines, the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 each include a respective outer panel, inner panel, and connector strip. The warming shell 12 and rain shell 14 are also configured such that operation of the cover 10 remains substantially consistent in relation to the various combinations of use, i.e. only the warming shell 12, only the rain shell 14, or a combination of the warming shell 12 and rain shell 14.

[0031] The warming shell 12 is preferably formed from a warm material, such as cotton (i.e., a sweatshirt material), polyester, or fleece, to provide additional warmth to the infant supported by the infant carrier 16. Other materials known in the art may also be used. The warming shell 12 may also provide warmth to the parent wearing the carrier 16. Thus, the warming shell 12 may be suitable when the infant carrier 16 is used in cold temperatures.

[0032] The rain shell 14 is preferably formed from a water-proof or water resistant material and is thus intended to protect the infant supported within the carrier 16 from rain, snow, sleet, or other wet environments. Exemplary materials include plastic and nylon, although other materials known by those skilled in the art may also be used.

[0033] It may be desirable to use the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 in combination with each other in cold, wet environments. However, in warmer, wet environments, as may be the case in tropical locals, the rain shell 14 may be used alone to protect the infant from the wetness.

[0034] Although the foregoing describes the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 as two separate elements that may be used either alone, or in combination with each other, those skilled in the art will appreciate that other embodiments may essentially combine the warming shell 12 with the rain shell 14 to include a single, integrated unit.

[0035] If the user desires to use the warming shell 12 in combination with the rain shell 14, the rain shell 14 may be connected to the warming shell 12. To combine the warming shell 12 with the rain shell 14, the second end portion of the warming shell 12 is inserted into the second end portion of the rain shell 14, such that the second end portion of the warming shell 12 is nested within the second end portion of the rain shell 14. The configuration of the warming shell 12 is substantially similar to the configuration of the rain shell 14 which helps in maintaining the second end portion of the warming shell 12 within the second end portion of the rain shell 14 during conventional usage of the cover 10. Although the cooperative configuration of the respective second end portions may alone maintain the warming shell 12 within the rain shell 14, those skilled in the art will appreciate that mechanical fasteners, such as snaps, hook and loop material, magnets, ties, buttons, or other mechanical fastening devices may be used to further secure the second end portions together.

[0036] To connect the first end portion of the warming shell 12 with the first end portion of the rain shell 14, the first end portion of the warming shell 12 is laid on top of the first end portion of the rain shell 14. The warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14 each including cooperating mechanical fasteners 58 (See FIG. 5) which engage with each other to secure the warming shell 12 to the rain shell 14. The lateral portion of the rain shell 14 is shown on top of the lateral portion of the warming shell 12. Each lateral portion includes multiple fasteners 58 which engage with each other to secure the rain shell 14 to the warming shell 12. The cover 10 depicted in FIG. 1 shows the warming shell 12 nested within, and attached to, an outer rain shell 14.

[0037] Referring back to FIGS. 2-3, one embodiment of the cover 10 includes a pocket panel 55 coupled to the outer panel 26 to define a "parent pocket" within which the parent may place his/her hands. The pocket panel 55 may be positioned on the outer panel 26 to provide easy access to the parent's hands (See FIGS. 13 and 14), as well as to allow a parent to rub the child so as to soothe and comfort the infant.

[0038] With the basic structural features of the cover 10 being described above, the following discussion will focus on use of the cover 10. The following discussion applies to either configuration of the cover 10, i.e., the warming shell 12 alone, the rain shell 14 alone, or the combination of the warming shell 12 and the rain shell 14.

[0039] The cover 10 may be secured to the infant carrier 16 before the infant is placed within the carrier 16, or after the

infant is placed in the carrier 16. The cover 10 is secured to the carrier 16 by wrapping the lateral portions 45 around the shoulder strap(s) 48 of the carrier 16 and connecting the fasteners 54a, 54b to secure the lateral portions 45 to the shoulder strap(s) 48. The cover 10 is arranged such that when the lateral portions 45 are connected to the shoulder strap(s) 48, the cape portion 38 is draped over the infant seat, with the outer panel 26 facing away from the infant seat and the inner panel 28 facing toward the infant seat.

[0040] If the infant is not disposed in the infant seat, the cover 10 remains in this position until the child is placed therein. When the child is in the infant carrier 16, the child's feet/legs are placed within the foot pocket 30 at the second end portion 20 of the cover 10. With the child's feet/legs extended into the foot pocket 30, the second end portion 20 of the cover 10 is maintained in place.

[0041] The size of the foot pocket 30 may be adjusted depending on the shape and size of the infant carrier, the size of the child's feet/legs, as well as the position of the child's legs. For instance, the foot pocket 30 may be expanded to conform to larger carriers, and constricted to conform to smaller, narrower carriers. Furthermore, the cover 10 may be adapted to cover a child's legs which straddle the parent, or a child's legs that hang down from the carrier 16. To this end, and referring now specifically to FIGS. 4A and 4B, the second end portion 20 of the cover 10 may include a pocket adjuster to adjust the size of the pocket 30. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 4A and 4B, the cover 10 includes a pair of cooperating fastener strips 60a, 60b which are used to adjust the size of the foot pocket 30. As shown in FIG. 4A, the fastener strips 60a, 60b are disengaged with each other to maximize the size of the foot pocket 30. Conversely, the fastener strips 60a, 60b are completely engaged in FIG. 4B to minimize the size of the foot pocket 30. The fastener strips 60a, 60b each include a plurality of fastener elements 62 to allow for selective variation of the size of the foot pocket 30 to adapt to the infant carrier, the size of the infant, as well as the position of the infant relative to the parent.

[0042] In addition to varying the size of the foot pocket 30, the inner edge 34 of the inner panel 28 may be adjusted to provide a snug fit around the infant. To facilitate such an adjustment, the drawstring 36 is may be manipulated to cinch the inner edge 34 around the infant. A locking member 64 may be connected to the drawstring 36 to maintain the tension in the drawstring 36 after the drawstring 36 has been cinched.

[0043] With the cover 10 in place, the infant may enjoy warmth and/or protection from the elements while the infant is seated within the carrier 16. The cover 10 may remain on the carrier 16 until the parent decides to remove the cover 10 from the carrier 16. To remove the cover 10 from the carrier 16, the mechanical fasteners 54a, 54b are disengaged and the lateral portions 45 are unwrapped from the shoulder straps 48. The cover 10 is the removed from the carrier 16 and the infant's legs/feet are removed from the foot pocket 30. The cover 10 of the present invention is uniquely suited to be used in combination with carriers having any one of a multiplicity of different shapes, sizes and/or structural attributes, the carrier 16 being exemplary only.

[0044] Additional modifications and improvements of the present invention may also be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Thus, the particular combination of components and steps described and illustrated herein is intended to represent only certain embodiments of the present invention,

and is not intended to serve as limitations of alternative devices and methods within the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A universal cover for use with an infant carrier, the universal cover comprising:

a cape including:

an outer panel defining a peripheral edge portion; and
an inner panel connected to the outer panel adjacent the peripheral edge portion thereof, the inner and outer panels collectively defining a peripheral pocket configured to capture a portion of an infant seated within an infant carrier within the cape; and

a connector coupled to the outer panel and configured to be engageable with the infant carrier for connecting the cape to the infant carrier.

2. The universal cover recited in claim 1, wherein the cape includes:

a first cape shell including the outer and inner panels; and
a second cape shell disposable over the first cape shell such that the first and second cape shells assume a nested configuration.

3. The universal cover recited in claim 2, wherein the second cape shell includes a second cape outer panel and a second cape inner panel defining a second cape pocket within which the first cape shell may be received in when the first cape shell is nested within the second cape shell.

4. The universal cover recited in claim 2, wherein the first cape shell is formed from cotton, polyester or fleece material, and the second cape shell is formed from a water-resistant material.

5. The universal cover recited in claim 1, wherein the cape includes an upper end portion, a lower end portion and a pair of opposed lateral portions extending between the upper and lower end portions, the cape being transitional between an expanded configuration and a contracted configuration such that the distance between the lateral end portions decreases as the cape transitions from the expanded configuration toward the contracted configuration.

6. The universal cover recited in claim 1, further including a drawstring connected to the inner panel, the drawstring being configured to cinch the cape around the infant carrier.

7. The universal cover recited in claim 1, further including a hand pocket connected to the cape, the hand pocket being configured to allow a user to place the user's hands therein.

8. The universal cover recited in claim 1, wherein the connector includes a pair of connector strips coupled to opposed lateral end portions of the cape, each connector strip being disposable in a looped configuration about a respective

one of a pair of shoulder straps of the infant carrier to connect the respective connector strip to the shoulder strap.

9. The universal cover recited in claim 1, further comprising a hood connected to the cape.

10. The universal cover recited in claim 9, wherein the hood is selectively removable from the cape.

11. A universal cover configured for use with an infant carrier, the cover comprising a cape having a folded segment extending around a portion of the periphery thereof to define a cape pocket configured to capture at least a portion of an infant seated within the infant carrier and to dispose the cape over a portion of the infant carrier.

12. The universal cover recited in claim 11, further including a connector coupled to the cape and connectable to the infant carrier for securing the cape to the infant carrier.

13. The universal cover recited in claim 11, wherein the cape includes an outer cape shell and an inner cape shell disposable within the outer cape shell to define a nested configuration.

14. The universal cover recited in claim 13, wherein the inner cape shell is formed from cotton, polyester or fleece material, and the outer cape shell is formed from a water-resistant material.

15. The universal cover recited in claim 11, wherein the cape includes an upper end portion, a lower end portion and a pair of opposed lateral portions extending between the upper and lower end portions, the cape being transitional between expanded configuration and a contracted configuration such that the distance between the lateral end portions decreases as the cape transitions from the expanded configuration toward the contracted configuration.

16. The universal cover recited in claim 15, further including a pair of complimentary fasteners connected to the cape, wherein the fasteners are connected when the cape is in the contracted configuration and disconnected when the cape is in the expanded configuration.

17. The universal cover recited in claim 11, further including a drawstring connected to the cape, the drawstring being configured to cinch the cape around the infant carrier.

18. The universal cover recited in claim 11, further including a hand pocket connected to the cape, the hand pocket being configured to allow a user to place the user's hands therein.

19. The universal cover recited in claim 11, further comprising a hood connected to the cape.

20. The universal cover recited in claim 19, wherein the hood is selectively removable from the cape.

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