(57) Abstract: This invention is for a portable blackout shade for an infant carrier designed specifically to promote good sleeping habits for babies when they fall asleep or need to sleep in their carriers. It fits strollers, carriages, joggers, baby/toddler car seats and Moses baskets. The said portable blackout shade has the added benefit of sun protection. Instead of using draped items on a pram to keep baby asleep the invention gives a safe darkened environment that encourages baby to sleep for longer at naptime. Unlike most traditional covers and sunshades, due to the design and fabric combination the baby or toddler cannot see out of the front of the pram which helps them switch off to sleep. Parents have viewing access to check on baby. It provides good protection from the elements as well as excellent ventilation for the baby.

Fig 3. Cover attached to stroller (front view)

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Title: PORTABLE BLACKOUT SHADE
Portable blackout shade

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a blackout shade for an infant carrier such as an infant buggy, a car seat or any other form of baby transport e.g. moses baskets. Due to the mobility of society, infants are frequently transported, often by automobile in a car seat or in a buggy or pram travel system.

Nap time is critical for young children to rejuvenate themselves both emotionally and physically, and parents of napping children often need that time to attend to various needs and errands. Many children, however, find it difficult to sleep in unfamiliar surroundings, some children find it difficult to take naps or sleep during the daytime if they are aware that there is a sunny day outside. This stems from the fact that melatonin, which is a natural hormone that aids sleep, is suppressed with daylight. Or the child is fascinated by the outside world and so fights the natural urge to sleep.

Either in or out of the car or buggy, the child is subjected to the elements. The infant is frequently subject to direct sunlight. The infant, frequently not being sufficiently mobile to seek shade on its own, must depend on its carers to take appropriate steps to provide shade to sleep. This is particularly important if on holiday in locations with intense sun.

Parents often require baby to continue in its normal sleep schedule despite being out of the home environment. Many modern parents believe that using blackout products are beneficial to help baby sleep as they cut out visual stimuli such as sunlight, people moving and other things of this kind which may disturb baby's sleep.

Blankets, coats, pegged muslins and towels may be placed over the buggy or car seat hood by parents or the baby carrier may be strategically positioned under an umbrella or in another shaded spot to provide the needed protection from the direct sunlight but this does not block out other distractions which may prevent sleep or protect from sun damage. Many child care products have recognized the need for shade devices. Baby strollers and other baby equipment have half domed sunshade devices or hoods which are typically opaque and nonadjustable. There are many blackout products on the market for blacking out windows.

There are many existing sunshade devices for an infant car seat or carrier. They are either adjustable and lightweight consisting of UV fabric that allows baby to see out or the
sunshades comprise of complex mesh, Velcro panels, self supporting structures and side bars that are quite cumbersome and still give the infant the chance to see out in some way but and are not small enough to be convenient to keep on hand at all times.

According to the American Cancer Society, limiting children's exposure to the sun reduces children's risk of skin cancer in later life. Skin cancer is the most common preventable cancer in the United States, affecting approximately 1,000,000 people every year.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention there is provided a blackout shade for an infant carrier sized to cover an opening of said infant carrier to block the passage of at least 50% of the visible light through the opening to prevent such light from reaching a baby or child in the infant carrier, said shade being provided with fastening means configured to secure the shade to the infant carrier, wherein the shade is provided with an opening through which a parent can check on a baby or child in the infant carrier.

The term infant carrier in intended to cover any child transportation device for carrying a baby or infant, such as a pram, pushchair, stroller, buggy, car seat or travel cot.

Preferably the opening is provided with a closure means. In a preferred embodiment the closure means comprises a zip fastener. Alternatively the closure means may comprise a hook and loop fastener or any other suitable releasable fastening means, such as laces or press studs.

The present invention provides a safer alternative to draping miscellaneous items over an infant carrier when baby has fallen asleep or for when parents try to encourage baby to sleep. These draped items can be moved by movement or wind and so the shade provided may be compromised.

The blackout shade may be made from a breathable knitted or woven fabric. Any wind that is present will not disturb its position due to the straps holding the shade in place. However, the occupant will benefit from the additional air movement due to the breathable nature of the fabric used. No other product is versatile for use on a stroller, jogger, car seat and pram. As a result of the inventor’s efforts, this invention significantly improves upon other products.
So far, there appears to be no other product which can act as a compact, portable blackout blind with UV protection for child car seats and buggies.

The shade may be made from UPF 40+ rated woven or knitted fabric.

The design and fabric combination darkens the inner environment of a range of infant carriers to encourage them to sleep for longer and is a safer alternative to draping items over the infant carrier as the shade is securely fastened to the infant carrier with fastenings.

The shade may be attached to the hood and frame of a stroller, carriage, or car seat via any suitable fastening means, such as fabric ties, hook and loop fasteners or elastic straps.

The shade may be dimensioned to fit strollers, carriages, joggers or baby/toddler car seats.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a flat plan view of a shade for an infant carrier in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a side view of the shade of Figure 1 attached to a stroller; and

Figure 3 is a front view of the shade attached to a stroller.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring to the drawings and in particular FIG. 1 (cover flat and unattached to hood, showing shape and detail) a portable blackout shade in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention provides a device for shielding an occupant in a hooded carriage/stroller, car seat or jogger from direct sunlight and outer visual stimuli. In addition, it protects from UV rays and gives the occupant protection from light rain showers and wind. In addition the flexibility of its fit means it can be fitted under most standard rain covers. The device includes a flexible sleep and UV shade configured so that on attachment to a hooded carriage, stroller, car seat or jogger, it defines a shaded area for the baby to aid sleep. Parents can see the baby easily from the front via a concealed opening in the front, provided with a releasable closure.
The shade comprises of a main body 1a made from a breathable material, more preferably a UPF40+ rated knitted or woven stretch fabric, preferably but not limited to micro fibre-polyester.

Fastening means 1c in the form of fabric or elastic ties, preferably provided with hook and loop fastenings, or elastic webbing any of a plethora of other suitable fastening means are provided for securing the shade to the frame of a stroller, 1d.

The upper region 1c and side regions 1d of the body of the shade 1a are provided with elasticated edge regions to keep shade secured to hood and down two sides of the stroller. A non-elasticated bottom region of shade allows legs of an occupant of the stroller to pop out without being affected by elasticated fabric as they get older.

The main body 1a is provided with a concealed opening 1e in a central region of the body to allow parents easy viewing access of sleeping child. The opening 1e is held closed by a closure means. In a preferred embodiment the closure means comprises a zip fastener. This is preferred as it can be easily and silently opened and closed without disturbing a sleeping infant. However, it is envisaged that other closure means may be provided for releasably closing the sealable opening 1c, such as hook and loop fasteners, press studs, lacing or any other suitable releasable closure means.

FIG. 2. Shows the shade attached to a hooded stroller. As shown in FIG. 2, the upper edge 1c of the shade sits on the top of an infant carrier hood.

By showing only FIG. 2 we are not limiting the use of the shade to this type of stroller, the shade can be used in the following embodiments: for all hooded strollers, hooded carriages, hooded joggers, any hooded device used for transporting baby, infant or toddler. It can also be used on baby car seats, for use in and outside of the car, and travel cots. The shade can be used on twin and triplet and tandem hooded strollers, hooded carriages, and hooded jogger. For twin and triplet and tandem carriers one item per baby would be required which gives the benefit not allowed by double shades that if one baby wakes up then it does not disturb any of the other carriage occupants if the shade comes off.

The blackout shade in its present invention has been designed to assist in the protection of babies and young children while they are exposed to the dangers of the sun. The shade is
preferably manufactured from a UPF50+ rated fabric, ensuring high level of protection from the sun's rays.

The shade easily attaches to most hooded prams, strollers, carriages, joggers and car seats by simply placing the elastic attachment means over the edge of the hood and securing the ties to the frame.

Advantageously, the shade is washable.

Although the invention has been described with reference to specific examples, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention may be embodied in many other forms.
CLAIMS

1. A portable blackout shade for an infant carrier, comprising: a flexible, woven or knitted material sized to cover an opening in a baby transport device that has at least one configuration that blocks passage of at least half of the visible light from the opening; and fastening mechanisms configured to secure the flexible material to the infant carrier and wherein a concealed opening allows parents to check on baby.

2. A blackout shade for an infant carrier sized to cover an opening of said infant carrier to block the passage of at least 50% of the visible light through the opening to prevent such light from reaching a baby or child in the infant carrier, said shade being provided with fastening means configured to secure the shade to the infant carrier, wherein the shade is provided with an opening through which a parent can check on a baby or child in the infant carrier.

3. A shade as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the opening is provided with a closure means.

4. A shade as claimed in claim 3, wherein the closure means comprises a zip fastener.

5. A shade as claimed in claim 3, wherein the closure means comprises a hook and loop fastener, laces or press studs.

6. A shade as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein half the visible light is blocked by the use of the woven or knitted fabric in layers with no openings for baby to see out of.

7. A shade as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the shade is portable as it is capable of being folded to cover an area smaller than the opening.

8. A shade as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the shade is formed from a breathable material to allow good ventilation for an infant in the infant carrier.
9. A shade as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said fastening means or mechanisms comprise fabric ties.

10. A shade as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8, wherein said fastening means or mechanisms comprise elastic straps.

11. A shade as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said fastening means or mechanisms means comprise or include hook and loop fasteners.

12. A portable blackout shade for an infant carrier with additional benefit of sun protection for the baby, said shade comprising fabric configured with a UPF in excess of 40 to be attached to a stroller canopy and frame or other attachments on infant carrier.
Fig. 1 Flat view of cover
Fig 2. Cover attached to stroller (side view)
Fig 3. Cover attached to stroller (front view)
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/GB2010/001868

A. CLASSIFICATION* SUBJECT MATTER

INV. B62B9/14

ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

B62B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

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X Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.  

X See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 December 2010

Date of mailing of the international search report

13/01/2011

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Wochi nz, Reinmar

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