

Description of a cradleboard by Frances Densmore

The cradle board, which a baby spent most of its time for the first year of its life, consisted of a board about 24 inches long with a curved piece of wood at one end to confine the child's feet and a hoop at right angles above the other end. A light rod was fastened loosely to one side of the cradle board and to this were attached the two binding bands, about 6 inches wide, which were pinned or tied over the child. In the old days the upper end of the board was cut in points and painted red or blue, and the entire structure was held together by thongs. Inside the curved wood at the foot of the cradle board was birch bark of the same shape filled with soft moss. The hoop above the child's head served as a support for a blanket in winter or for a thin cloth in summer, thus protecting the child's head from the weather. On this hoop were hung small articles intended as charms or for the child's amusement. The leather strap fastened near the hoop enabled the mother to carry it on her back. If she were carrying only a cradle the strap was across her chest, but if she were carrying a pack, she put the pack strap across her chest and the strap of the cradle board across her forehead. The binding bands were formerly of list cloth and decorated only on the portion above the cradle board, but as beads and worsted braid became more common the decoration was extended over the entire length. The women took great pride in the decoration of these bands. Strips of hide were used in early days to hold the bands in place; these were followed by flat woven braid about an inch wide, made of yarn, one such braid being tied over each band.

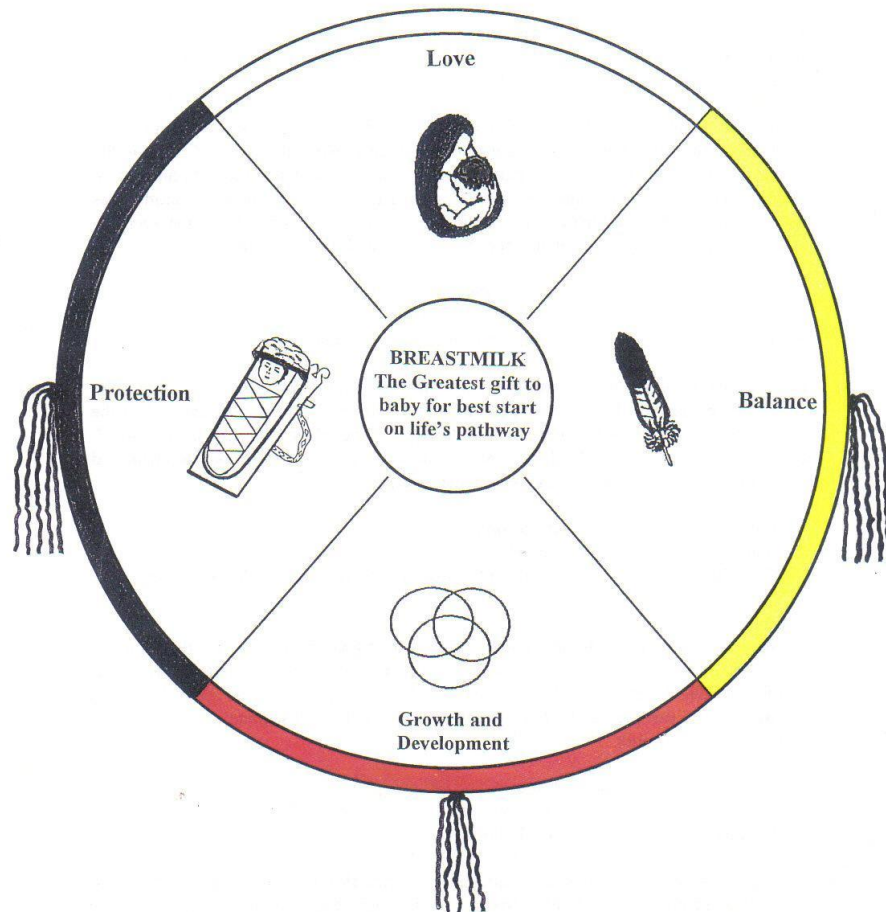
from Frances Densmore, Chippewa Customs (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979) 48-49



Ojibway Cradleboard, Northeastern Ontario (National Museum of Man, Ottawa)

How I use T’KINAGAN- CRADLEBOARD Teachings

Breastfeeding



Medicine Wheel Teaching
written by
Rosella Kinoshameg

Good Medicine

T’KINAGAN – CRADLEBOARD is in the West

- WEST
- BLUE/BLACK
- T’KINAGAN – CRADLEBOARD
 - Foundation: Mother provides foundation, gives future to baby

- Protection: used for protection and security, baby wrapped securely; Mother's breastmilk is nature's vaccine; Antibodies present in breastmilk give immunities to illnesses: iron deficiency anemia, overfeeding, obesity, insulin dependent diabetes, skin disorders, allergic reactions, GI/respiratory/ear infections
- Discipline: baby uses eyes to focus, be observant, Mother's milk is important for discipline so child will listen

