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Product Reviews

Featuring: Poco Premium

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When Osprey set out to create its first line of child carrier packs for 2012, it didn't want to compromise on what the brand is best known for — comfort and fit. That presented a challenge for the designers of the new Osprey Poco series. They had to consider the comfort and fit of at least three different people — mom, dad and kid. So when SNEWS received the new Osprey Poco Premium (MSRP: \$299) to test this spring, we threw every size of person at the pack with a patient baby in tow to give it the full test. Minus a few nitpicks, it's one of the best child carriers we've tested.

The Poco's ability to easily and quickly dial in fit and comfort for all is its highlight. The torso height adjustment is extremely accessible and can be set anywhere along a 6-inch adjustable range. This all made switching from 5-foot, 4-inch tall mom to 5-foot, 11-inch tall dad multiple times during hikes a breeze. With additional adjustments on the hip belt, shoulder straps, and load lifters, all of our testers were able to properly shift the bulk of the pack's weight to the hips and maximize comfort. To each of us, it felt like our own custom-fitted pack. The child's seat and shoulder straps are also adjustable to account for different-sized children. Once everything was set, and the pack was on our back, the Poco immediately showed off its next impressive feat — extreme stability. There's something to be said for extra security when you're carrying a baby on your back versus just a tent and sleeping bag. That was especially true when we set out on the rocky, steep and loose-rock infested trails in our backyard of Boulder, Colo. All testers felt the pack completely stable and secure, including our 10-month-old cargo, who would fall asleep for good parts of hikes, even as we purposely jostled around on the rocks. The Poco Premium, which is Osprey's deluxe version in the line, has a rather large footprint to it, including a detachable daypack and plenty of storage in a bottom, zippered compartment. An added benefit is that testers hardly felt the larger size because of the aforementioned comfort and stability. While we found the extra space great for longer hikes, we wondered if it might be little big for traveling or shorter excursions. Osprey does make two smaller versions in the Poco Plus (\$259) and regular Poco (\$199).





The Poco Premium also features a compartment for a water reservoir, but we were disappointed to find that none several side mesh pockets could hold a typical Nalgene water bottle. As marketed by Osprey, ventilation for both the child and adult were extremely effective at keeping us dry and comfortable.

For its first entry into child carriers, Osprey has delivered a winning product. The Poco line should especially play well to outdoor customers who have come to expect tailored comfort and fit in their packs. Suggested Retail: Poco Premium (\$299), Poco Plus (\$259), Poco (\$199)

SNEWS® Rating: 4.5 hands clapping (1 to 5 hands clapping possible, with 5 clapping hands representing functional and design perfection)

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