



BROOME COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD NEWSLETTER

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National Child Passenger Safety Week

Feb/Mar 2007

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, unintentional injuries are the leading cause of childhood deaths. Motor vehicle crashes account for nearly 42% of all these unintentional childhood injury-related deaths ages 0-14. Children are our future and we need to keep them safe when riding in a vehicle. That is why this month we recognize *National Child Passenger Safety Week*. Using proper child restraints or child safety seat correctly every time can help prevent these childhood deaths and injuries. This may sound simple but choosing and installing a car seat can be pretty complicated. Many parents are unsure of what kind of car seat to purchase, where/how to install it in their vehicle, which belt path to use, how tight the harness straps should be and the list goes on. These are not uncommon problems and concerns. National statistics show that 80% of parents in the United States are incorrectly using their car seats. And no wonder...child passenger safety is an ever changing concept. Every day newer laws and technology are created to improve the protection of our children. So let's take a closer look at some of the basic practices in child passenger safety starting with factors to consider when selecting a car seat....

Selecting a Car Seat

- ❖ **Safety**
 - Is the car seat FMVSS 213 certified?
 - Do you know the history of the car seat?
 - Has the car seat been involved in a moderate or severe crash?
 - Is the car seat more than 10 years old?
- ❖ **Appropriate for the child**
 - Age?
 - Size?
 - Physical development?
 - Behavioral needs?
- ❖ **Compatibility**
 - Is the car seat compatible with your vehicle?
 - Bucket seats?
 - Leather interior?
- ❖ **Convenience Factors**
 - Is it easy to use?
- ❖ **Comfort**
 - Is your child comfortable in the car seat?
 - Color?
 - Type of upholstery?

FACT:

Child safety seats are **71%** effective in reducing deaths for infants in passenger cars.
Child safety seats are **54%** effective in reducing deaths for children ages 1 to 4 in passenger cars.



The Infant Car Seat:

Age:

- Birth (5lbs) - 1 year.

Weight:

- 5lbs-22lbs.

Height:

- Less than 26".

Installation Direction:

- Rear facing.

Recline angle:

- Semi-reclined at about 45 degrees.
- Use no more than 3 rolled towels or pool noodles to achieve angle.
- If infant is too upright, their head can fall forward and obstruct their air ways.

Harness Straps:

- At or below infant's shoulders.
- Snug enough so that you can slip only one finger between the harness and the child's collar bone.
- Harness retainer clip should be at armpit level.

Special Notes:

- Rear facing seats support the entire head, neck and back. It cradles and moves with the child reducing stress to the neck and spinal cord in a crash.
- The infant's head should not extend beyond the top of the seat's shell and there should be at least 1" of space between the top to the shell and the top of the child's head.
- Never place a rear facing seat in front of an active air bag.



The Convertible Seat:

Convertibles can be used either rear or forward facing.

Age:

- Rear facing: Birth (5lbs) to at least 1 year old.
- Forward facing: Over 1 year old.

Weight:

- Rear facing: 20 to 30/35lbs (depending on model).
- Forward facing: Up to 40lbs.

Installation Direction:

- Rear facing: Reclined position.
- Forward facing: Upright position.

Harness Straps:

- Rear facing: At or below shoulders.
- Forward facing: At or above shoulders.
 - Thread harness through top reinforced slots on seat.
- Snug enough so that you can slip only one finger between the harness and the child's collar bone.
- Harness retainer clip should be at armpit level.

Special Notes:

- Rear facing convertibles are usually used when the child outgrows the infant car seat but has not yet reached 20lbs and 1 year old. Convertible seats can accommodate larger children in the rear facing position. Child must be 20lbs AND 1 year old in order to face forward.



5 Point Harness

The Forward Facing Only Seat:

Age:

- At least 1 year old.

Weight:

- At least 20lbs.
- Weight limit: 40lbs, some models 50-80lbs.

Installation Direction:

- Forward facing.

Harness Straps:

- At or above child's shoulders.
- Harness should be threaded through top reinforced slots.
- Snug enough so that you can slip only one finger between the harness and the child's collar bone.
- Harness retainer clip should be at armpit level.
- Most car seats have a 40lb weight limit with internal harness.



Special Notes:

- These seats are designed as forward facing seats only and should not be used with infants.

The Booster Seat:

Effective March 27, 2005, children between the ages of 4-7 & under 4'9" tall must use an appropriate child restraint system.

Age:

- Most 4-8 year olds.

Weight:

- Minimum weight: 30-40lbs.
- Maximum weight: 60-100lbs.

Installation Direction:

- Forward facing, however seat is not secured into vehicle by seatbelt or LATCH.

Harness Straps:

- If booster contains an internal harness, it needs only be used if child is under 40lbs (combination seat), otherwise child uses as safety belt.

Special Notes:

- Booster seats provide a transition from a car seat with internal harness to vehicle lap and shoulder belts. Booster seats lift child up so that the seatbelt fits correctly on them.
- Two Types of Boosters:
 - Shield Boosters
 - Originally designed for vehicles with lap belts only.
 - Because shield provides no upper body support in a crash, it is preferable to remove shield and use as a backless booster with a lap and shoulder belt.
 - Belt Positioning Boosters
 - Backless boosters have only a base and must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.
 - High Back Boosters
 - Provide head restraint for vehicle seats without a built in head rest and must also be used with a lap and shoulder belt.



So how do you know when your child is ready to wear a seatbelt???

Just follow The 5 Step Test!

The 5 Step Test:

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to make the shoulder and lap belt fit right for the best crash protection.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A



FACT:

Child safety seats are **69%** effective in reducing the need for hospitalization.



How do you obtain a tight installation?

- Make sure the car seat is facing the right direction.
- Make sure you are using the correct belt path.
 - Rear facing: Belt path is at child's feet.
 - Forward facing: Belt path is at child's back.
- Compress the car seat into the vehicle seat by either using your hand or knee.
- Use either the seatbelt or **LATCH** system to secure seat. *Never both!*
- Buckle, tighten and lock the safety belt or **LATCH** system.
- To check tightness, wiggle car seat at the belt path. Car seat should move no more than 1".

Protection Provided by a Child Safety Seat

- ❖ Prevents ejection.
- ❖ Distributes forces of a crash to the strongest parts of the skeleton- hips, back & shoulders.
- ❖ Spread crash forces over a broad area of the body.
- ❖ Helps the body "ride down" the crash.
- ❖ Protects the head and spinal cord.

What is the best child restraint?

1. One that fits your child.
2. One that fits your vehicle.
3. One that you will use correctly every time.



What's LATCH?

Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children

- LATCH anchors safety seats securely in the back seat.
 - It does not require the use of seat belts.
- LATCH is a standardized system.
 - Installation is about the same in all new vehicles.

LATCH uses:

- Lower anchors & lower attachments.
 - 2 lower anchors in the seat crease.
 - Lower attachments on each side of the safety seat that connect to the lower anchors.
- A top anchor & an upper tether.
 - A top anchor usually located near the rear window.
 - An upper tether strap on the safety seat that clips to the top anchor.

Installing LATCH:

1. Fasten lower attachments to lower anchors in the vehicle seat.
2. Press the safety seat down by using your weight.
3. Tighten lower attachments while pressing down.
4. Attach the top tether (if available) to top anchor & tighten.
5. Check the installation before every ride.

****Even with LATCH mistakes are possible. Always check your vehicle and car seat manual for proper installation. ****



Your child may be too big for their car seat if....

- **Rear facing/Convertible:** head is extending beyond the top of the seat's shell or there is less than 1" of space between the top of their head and the top of the seat.
- **Forward facing/Convertible:** their shoulders are above the top harness slots or their ears are above the back of the seat's shell.
- **Boosters:** the middle of your child's ears are above the back of the vehicle seat.

Problems with using second hand seats:

- **May be missing labels & instructions.**
- **May not meet current FMVSS compliance.**
- **May be recalled.**
- **Parts may be missing or not in working order.**
- **Seat could have hairline cracks or loose rivets.**
- **Crash history of seat unknown.**
- **May be expired- older than 6 years.**
- **Manufacturer may not still be in business.**

Even if the seat passes this criteria, it is still best not to use second hand seats

Broome County Traffic Safety Board Announcements

February 1, 2007

Town of Colonie Operations Center

Tentative New York State Association of Traffic Safety Boards General Meeting

February 6, 2007, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Child Safety Seat Check at Sheriff's Dept.

February 11-17, 2007

Child Passenger Safety Week

February 13, 2007, 12 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Child Safety Seat Check at Sheriff's Dept.

February 14, 2007, 4p.m.

Broome County Health Department

Broome County Traffic Safety Board Meeting

March 12, 2007, 1:30p.m.

Broome County Office Building, 5th Floor

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting

Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Classes

3/5/07-3/8/07

Elmira Heights Fire Station
Elmira, New York

4/2/07-4/5/07

Cortlandville Fire Department
Cortland, New York

8/13/07-8/17/07

TBA

Rochester, New York

****More Child Passenger Safety Certification information may be found on the Safe Kids Worldwide website**

<http://www.safekids.org/certification/>

We want to know what you think!
Please send us your feedback about our newsletter to:

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607-778-2807



Want more info on car seats?
Contact:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1-888-347-4236

www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County Executive

Graphics and research provided by the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee www.safenyc.com, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration www.nhtsa.dot.gov and Safe Kids Campaign <http://www.safekids.org/>. The production of this newsletter was made possible through funding from the NYSGTSC.