

# Promoting Child Passenger Safety in your Community



## Toolkit for Auto Dealerships

New York State Department of Health  
2010

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# Promoting Child Passenger Safety in Your Community Toolkit for Automobile Dealerships

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## Child Passenger Safety Issues

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- Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause injuries and deaths for children 0-14 years in the nation and New York State.
- Restraint use among young children often depends upon the driver's seat belt use. Almost 40% of children riding with unbelted drivers were themselves unrestrained.
- Child restraint systems are often used incorrectly. Approximately nine out of every ten child restraints checked by certified child passenger safety technicians were found to be used incorrectly. Inappropriately restrained children are nearly three and a half times more likely to be seriously injured in a crash than their appropriately restrained counterparts.
- Many children aged 4-8 years are not using belt-positioning booster seats which reduce the risk of injuries through proper placement of the shoulder and lap belt. In 2007 only 35% of children aged 4-8 were using child safety restraints when involved in police reported crashes.

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## Child Passenger Safety Facts

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- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that children under age 13 ride in the back seat. Children riding in this location are 38 percent less likely to be injured in a crash.
- A child needs to progress through different child restraints as they age and grow: rear-facing child safety seats, forward-facing child safety seats, belt-positioning booster seats, and seat belts.
- Properly used child safety seats reduce the risk of death in passenger cars by 71% for infants and by 54% for toddlers. According to researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, for children 4 to 8 years, booster seats reduce injury risk by 45% compared to seat belts alone.

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## New York State Law – Child Passengers

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- *Children under age 4 must be restrained in a federally approved child safety seat.*
- *Children must be restrained in an appropriate child restraint system until their eighth birthday.*  
The restraint system can include a child safety seat, booster seat or vest and must comply with the child height and weight recommendations determined by the manufacturer. The safety belt in a vehicle is not designed for children. A booster seat raises your child up so that the safety belt fits your child correctly and provides better protection.

### Recommended Safety Practice

Children should continue to use belt-positioning booster seats after their eighth birthday if the seat belts do not fit properly when using safety belt alone. Before moving a child from a booster seat to the vehicle seat belts make sure that the child meets **all** of the following requirements for proper seat belt fit:

1. The child must be at least 8 years old.
2. The child should be able to sit with his or her back straight against the vehicle seat back.
3. The knees should bend comfortably at the seat's edge without slouching.
4. The lap belt should be low across the upper thighs or hips, not across the abdomen.
5. The shoulder belt should lie across the chest and shoulder, not touching the neck or face.
6. The child should be able to ride this way for the entire trip.
7. Booster seat use is recommended until the child is 4'9" tall or weighs 100 lbs.

For more information about New York's Occupant Restraint law go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com)



## Child Passenger Safety Outreach Benefits for Dealership Involvement

There are many benefits for providing child passenger safety information and outreach to your customers. These can include:

- A child's life may be saved! Most children killed in motor vehicle crashes were not using child restraints or inappropriately restrained.
- Favorable media coverage received from your involvement in child passenger safety outreach may enhance your public image and improve customer relations.
- Safely transporting their children is a primary concern for families purchasing vehicles. Providing information on child passenger safety best practices, vehicle safety options and community resources can help your sales staff better meet the needs of your customers.
- Taking a leadership role to promote child passenger safety may give your business a competitive edge in your community.
- Having a certified child passenger safety technician on staff can provide a potential life-saving service to the people in your community and reflects the car dealership's genuine commitment and interest in helping customers to address the passenger safety needs of their children.
- Child passenger safety education and outreach can be conducted at minimal cost to automobile dealerships and provide invaluable safety benefits to families.



## Child Passenger Safety Vehicle Selling Points

Consider having a local certified Child Passenger Safety Technician or Instructor conduct an in-service presentation for your sales staff to provide more information on these vehicle features. For a list of contacts for your county, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com).

1. **Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH)** is a system available in vehicles developed to make it easier to install child restraints.



- a. **Point out the location of lower anchors in vehicles as part of the LATCH system.** Refer to the vehicle owner's manual when showing this feature to customers as some vehicles do not allow the use of the LATCH in certain rear seating positions.



Top Tether Anchor Photo  
(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

- b. **Point out the location of the tether anchors in the vehicle as part of the LATCH system.** Refer to each vehicle owner's manual to identify the location of the tether anchors. The tether is also recommended when installing forward-facing child safety seats with the vehicle's safety belts.



LATCH Lower Anchor Photo  
(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

2. **Seat Belt Adjusters** are a feature found in many vehicles that can be used to properly position the shoulder belt over the middle of the shoulder. **Check the vehicle owner's manual regarding its proper use.**

1. **Automatic Protection Features** help reduce motor vehicle injuries to passengers without taking any action. Point out the location of these features and warning labels while referring to the owner's manual.
  - a. **Front Driver and Passenger Air Bags** generally open in front-end crashes. It is recommended that all children under age 13 ride in the back seat to avoid contact with the front seat air bag system. Rear-facing infants should never ride in front of an active air bag.
  - b. **Side Air Bags** generally open in side-impact crashes and are found in the door or vehicle seat.
  - c. **"Smart" Air Bags** is a system that will detect when a child is present and automatically deactivate the air bag or enable it to deploy safely. Keep in mind that the best safety practice is to have children ride in the back seat as this is the safest location in the vehicle.
  - d. **Inflatable Curtains** generally open in side-impact crashes or vehicle roll over crashes. They are often found above the doors at the edge of the roof.

**Please take note that it is very important for the customer to read the vehicle owner's manual regarding the proper use of child restraints in seating positions with "smart" and side air bags.**

2. **Integrated Child Safety Seats** are child restraints built into some vehicles that can be used to transport a child in a forward-facing direction. These seats may have 5-point harnesses or be used as belt-positioning booster seats. They are not portable. Check the vehicle owner's manual for instructions and weight and height limits.

For a contact list of certified child passenger safety technicians and instructors in your area, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com). For more information about vehicle safety features, go to [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).



## Community Outreach Strategies

The following strategies may be used to increase public awareness of child passenger safety, educate families about appropriate child passenger safety practices, and help generate showroom traffic.

- Have staff trained to become certified child passenger safety technicians to provide hands-on child safety seat installation education to your customers and/or community members at your facility. In order to provide accurate information and attain the basic skills to properly assess and provide accurate installation guidance to parents, it is essential for staff to complete the required training to become a nationally certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician. For more information on the CPS technician certification training program, go to [www.safekids.org/certification/](http://www.safekids.org/certification/). For a list of courses in your area, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com).
- Work with local CPS technicians from local agencies to host a child safety seat check-up event at your location or co-sponsor an event conducted at a different location. For a listing of CPS technicians and schedule of check-up events in your county, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com). Many child safety seat check-up events are conducted by members of local Safe Kids Coalitions and Chapters. If you are interested in partnering with a Safe Kids Coalition or Chapter to conduct an event, a contact list of coordinators can be found by visiting [http://usa.safekids.org/state\\_display.cfm](http://usa.safekids.org/state_display.cfm).
- Have a display of child passenger safety educational materials and/or offer a demonstration on child safety seat installation by a CPS technician at your events.
- Set up stand-up and/or table-top displays of educational materials for consumers and their children in the showroom, customer waiting area, and/or service check-out area.
- Distribute incentives such as litter bags, key chains, vehicle document holders and educational materials to customers purchasing and/or servicing their vehicles. Feel free to download the booster seat coloring and activity sheets available on the NYSDOH website at [www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury\\_prevention](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury_prevention)
- Insert child passenger safety information in routine mailings to customers.
- Play a DVD or video on child passenger safety for customers in your waiting area. Go to [http://www.carseat.org/Resources/Don't\\_Risk\\_order7.pdf](http://www.carseat.org/Resources/Don't_Risk_order7.pdf) to order "Don't Risk Your Child's Life –Automobile Safety for Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Version VII which provides the most up-to-date information on this topic.

- Incorporate child passenger safety messages in display ads or the automobile classified section of newspapers.
- Post child passenger safety information on your website and provide links to reputable national and state websites (refer to the Child Passenger Safety Resources section of this guide).
- Include a child passenger safety message with email correspondence sent to consumers.
- Partner with a local retail outlet or department store that sells child safety seats and booster seats. Offer discounted coupons to provide to customers who attend your events or have their car serviced.
- Have a drawing for a free child safety seat or booster seat. Make sure the winner receives hands-on installation education on its use by a certified CPS technician.
- Donate child safety seats to a child safety seat distribution program for low-income families in your county. Contact the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee at (518)474-6407 or (518)474-5111 or the NYS DOH Bureau of Injury Prevention at [injury@health.state.ny.us](mailto:injury@health.state.ny.us) for contact information in your county.
- Partner with elementary schools and other community traffic safety partners to conduct a booster seat coloring sheet or poster contest.
- In order to promote the seat belt message, partner with middle and/or high schools to sponsor and/or conduct a "Battle of the Belts" safety belt contest. Preliminary battles are conducted annually with teams having the option of attending the "World Championship Battle of the Belts" competition at Sean's Run which is held annually in April at Chatham High school. For more information, go to [www.seansrun.com](http://www.seansrun.com).



## Making the Connection Successful Partnership Initiatives

### Livingston County



The Livingston Cornell Cooperative Extension partners with Wentworth Motors to promote child passenger safety in their community. The car dealership hosts child safety seat check-up events, booster seat give-aways, a pre-teen traffic safety program, and provides child passenger safety information through a variety of venues such as on their website, in newspaper ads and

displays at their facility. In-service presentations addressing child passenger safety have been conducted for all sales and service personnel by certified child passenger safety technicians. Wentworth Motors has also provided funding to support community child passenger safety efforts.

“Wentworth Motors is a full service dealer. We are not only concerned with the sale. We want to educate our customers about the safety of our product and also the safety of their families.”

“Wentworth Motors also feels it provides an important service by assisting the Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Traffic Safety Education Program to educate our community about the safety of their children. Children of today are our customers of tomorrow!”



*Tim Wearkley, Sales Manager, Wentworth Motors, Inc.*

## New York City

The New York City Department of Transportation and Safe Kids New York City work with Uptown Chevrolet Cadillac to promote child passenger safety by operating a monthly car safety seat inspection station at its location. The dealership provides excellent indoor space for safety seat check-up events in the service area, as well as storage space for supplies, signs and car seats. Car seat information is available in the showroom and waiting area. The inspection station is very busy with certified child passenger safety technicians helping families from all five boroughs, as well as Westchester and Nassau Counties and even New Jersey, safely transport their children.



## Chenango County



"We were excited that our dealership, Benedict Corporation Subaru GMC & Pre-Owned, was invited to become a member of a child passenger safety outreach initiative. Participating in this child passenger safety outreach is a natural fit with our day-to-day operations. We have three opportunities to provide information to our community and demonstrate on how to properly install child safety seats;

when a vehicle is appraised for trade, at the time of vehicle delivery when customers transfer seats from their old vehicle to their new one, and when people utilize our Service, Collision, or Detail Centers. It's amazing how many seats we find improperly installed. When our "neighbors" drive away, we feel confident knowing that in the event of a crash, their children will be safe and not become a heart-breaking statistic."



*Chris Aponte, Benedict Corporation Subaru GMV & Pre-Owned*



## Sample News Release

### **(Name of Dealership) Takes Steps to Provide Life-Saving Information to Families**

Keeping children safe when riding in the car is a priority for parents and caregivers. When used properly, child safety and booster seats are proven “life savers,” reducing the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers. Unfortunately, national studies have shown that more than 80 % of child safety seats are not used properly or parents are using the wrong type of child restraint for their child. Inappropriately restrained children are nearly three and a half times more likely to be seriously injured in crashes compared to children buckled up properly.

“Many parents and caregivers are unaware that their child may be riding in the wrong type of restraint or that their child safety seats are not installed or used properly,” stated (Owner of Dealership). The (Name of Dealership) and (traffic safety or public health agency/organization) have joined efforts to participate in a community outreach campaign entitled “4 Steps 4 Kids-The Right Seat Matters.” This campaign is designed to educate dealers, parents, caregivers and children on steps to take to ensure that their children are riding safely in motor vehicles. The initiative was developed by the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Injury Prevention through a grant received from the New York State Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee.

“Children are precious cargo. Our business is committed to providing this life-saving information to parents and caregivers so they can keep their children safe when riding in their cars,” stated (Owner of Dealership).

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics show nearly half of the deaths and injuries occur each year because children are not restrained properly. Before transporting a child, the (Owner of Dealership) recommends that parents use an appropriate child safety seat for their child. The best car seat is one that fits your child and vehicle properly and is easy to use correctly on EVERY ride. Parents should follow these recommendations issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to determine the type of child restraint to use based upon a child’s age and size.

**Step 1** – For the best protection, infants should be placed in a rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat, as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height of the particular seat according to the child safety seat manufacturer’s instructions.

**Step 2** - Use a forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat of your car when your child has reached the highest weight or height limit of a rear-facing child safety seat. At a minimum, a child should be at least age 1 and 20 pounds before riding in a forward-facing child safety seat. Keep your child in a forward-facing child safety seat until he/she reaches the upper weight or height limit of the seat according to the child safety seat manufacturer’s instructions (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).

**Step 3** – Use a belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt in the back seat when your child outgrows his/her forward facing child safety seat, either by height or weight. A booster seat should be used until the seat belts fits correctly.

**Step 4** – Use a lap and shoulder belt in the back seat when the seat belts fits properly. Most children fit properly in seat belts when they reach 4 feet 9 inches (usually 8 -10 years-old).

Follow the vehicle owner’s manual and car seat manufacturer’s instructions carefully to make sure your car seat is used properly and correctly installed.

As part of the campaign, (Name of Dealership) and (local agency) will be conducting the following activities: (insert activities, dates, times)

Certified child passenger safety (CPS) technicians are individuals who have received specialized training to provide hands-on guidance to parents and caregivers on the proper use and installation of child safety seats. For a listing of child safety seat check-up events, car seat inspection or fitting stations and CPS technicians in your area, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com). For more information about child passenger safety, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com) or [www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury\\_prevention/](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury_prevention/)



## Sample Radio Public Service Announcements

### Appropriate Child Safety Seats

#### 30 seconds

Is your child using the right type of car seat? The right seat matters for safety. Use a car seat that fits your child based upon his/her age, weight and height. Make sure the car seat is properly installed in your car by following the manufacturer's instructions for that seat and the vehicle owner's manual. For more information on keeping your child safe in the car, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com). This message is brought to you by (Name of Dealership) and this station.

#### 20 seconds

Is your child using the right type of car seat? The right seat matters for safety. Use a car seat that fits your child based upon his/her age, weight and height. This message was brought to you by (Name of Dealership) and this station.

### Prevent Misuse

#### 30 seconds

Did you know that four out of every five car seats are not used correctly? Read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle owner's manual when using and installing a child safety seat. The time you invest in your child's safety may save a life! For more information on keeping your child safe in the car, go to [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com). This message is brought to you by (Name of Dealership) and this station.

#### 20 seconds

Did you know that four out of every five car seats are not used correctly? Take the time to read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle owner's manual when using and installing your child's car seat. This message was brought to you by (Name of Dealership) and this station.



## Child Passenger Safety Resources

### Child Passenger Safety Information and Educational Materials

#### **New York State Department of Health**

Print materials on child passenger safety available at no charge and on-line brochures

[www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury\\_prevention/](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/injury_prevention/)

#### **New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee**

Listing of child safety seat check-up events and fitting stations, information on the NYS occupant restraint law and on-line brochure addressing child passenger safety

[www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com)

#### **New York State Police**

Print materials on child passenger safety available at no charge

[www.troopers.state.ny.us/Traffic\\_Safety/](http://www.troopers.state.ny.us/Traffic_Safety/)

#### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

Print materials addressing child passenger safety and National Child Passenger Safety Week and Seat Check Saturday campaign resources

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

### Partnership Opportunities

#### **Safe Kids USA**

Contact information for local Safe Kids coalitions and chapters in New York State who are involved in child passenger safety education and outreach. Print materials on child passenger safety may be available by contacting a coalition in your region

<http://usa.safekids.org/>

#### **New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee**

Contact information for local certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians

[www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com)

## **Child Passenger Safety Technician Training and Certification**

[www.safekids.org/certification/](http://www.safekids.org/certification/)

## **Technical Resource on Child Passenger Safety**

**Safe Ride News**

<http://www.saferidenews.com/srndnn/>

## **Child Restraint and Vehicle Recall Information**

<http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/childseat.cfm>

## **Automobile Company Resources**

National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA)

[www.nada.org](http://www.nada.org)

For automaker-specific materials addressing child passenger safety, contact your company's headquarters. These programs are usually run by their safety or communications departments.

## **Additional Useful Websites**

**SafeBeltSafe USA**

[www.carseat.org/](http://www.carseat.org/)

**Stokes@Children's Hospital**

<http://stokes.chop.edu/programs/carseat/index.php>

**American Academy of Pediatrics**

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

A Guide to Implementing Child Passenger Safety Inspection Stations

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/CPSInspectionStation/index.html>

# Child Passenger Safety

## A PARENT'S PRIMER

When you're an expectant mother, it's important to always wear your seat belt to protect you and your unborn child. Wear the lap belt across your hips and below your belly with the shoulder belt across your chest (between your breasts). Once your baby is born, follow these important safety steps.

## GROWING UP SAFE: It's a four-step process.

As children grow, how they sit in your car, truck or SUV should change.

Save your child from injury or death by observing all four steps:

- 1 REAR-FACING SEATS**  For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 **and** at least 20 pounds.
- 2 FORWARD-FACING SEATS**  When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age 1 **and** at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
- 3 BOOSTER SEATS**  Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall).
- 4 SEAT BELTS**  When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat, if it fits properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

## Get Help!

### ON THE WEB

Go to [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) and choose Child Safety Seat Information from the menu or click on the child passenger safety icon. The site includes child safety seat installation tips, product ratings, recalls, and other useful information.

### BY PHONE

For more information about child safety seats, booster seats, inspection/fitting stations in your area, seat belts, air bags, and

other highway safety issues, call the DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline at: 1-888-327-4236.

### NEAR YOU

A certified child passenger safety technician can check your installation and answer questions. To find a technician or an inspection station near you, go to [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov), click on the child passenger safety icon, and then click on the Fitting/Inspection Station link or go to [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).

**REMEMBER: All children under 13 should ride in the back seat.**

Always read the child restraint instructions and the vehicle owner's manual.





**Promoting Child Passenger Safety in Your Community  
 Toolkit for Automobile Dealerships  
 Evaluation Form**

Please rate the usefulness of the toolkit for conducting child passenger safety outreach. Circle the appropriate number for each item.

1 – Very Useful, 2 – Useful, 3 – Somewhat Useful, 4 – Not Useful, 5- Did Not Use

Child Passenger Safety Issues & Facts	1	2	3	4	5
Benefits for Dealership Involvement	1	2	3	4	5
Child Passenger Safety-Vehicle Selling Points	1	2	3	4	5
Community Outreach Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Making the Connection - Successful Partnership Initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
Sample News release	1	2	3	4	5
Sample PSAs	1	2	3	4	5
Child Passenger Safety Resources	1	2	3	4	5

What other information would be useful to include in this toolkit?

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Please indicate activities your business has conducted to promote child passenger safety.

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Do you have any other suggestions or comments? Please indicate below.

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Please fax or email this form to the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Injury Prevention at (518)474-3067 or [injury@health.state.ny.us](mailto:injury@health.state.ny.us). Thank you for your input.