

Buckle Up!

A Lesson on Car Seat Safety

Playgroup #11

Materials Needed

- Borrow or bring in car owner's manuals and car seat manuals
- You will need a car and car seat for the activity

Handouts

- Facts About Car Seats
- Top Ten Car Seat Tips

Introduction

Bring in a few car seat manuals and car owner's manuals. Have the women in your playgroup get in small groups and give each group a car seat manual and owner's manual. Have them read through the manuals. See if they can determine if the car seat is appropriate for the car and how to install it correctly.

Here are some quick tips to share with the mothers in your playgroup about finding an appropriate car seat.

1. Look for a car seat that has a 5-point harness.



2. Only buy a car seat that you can figure out in the store. If you can't figure it out in the store, it is probably too complicated.
3. Buy a seat that fits your car. Some stores, such as Babies 'R' Us, will allow you to test the seat in your car before you purchase it.
4. Make sure your child meets the seat's weight and height requirements.
5. Go to www.carseatdata.org to learn more about what car seat is right for you and your child.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand how to correctly use infant, toddler, and booster seats
- Know when and how to safely use the car safety belt on your child
- Know where to go for car seat classes and safety checks

In Utah County, 88% all car seats are used incorrectly. It is important that you understand what type of car seat is appropriate for your child's age and size as well as how to correctly use that car seat so that it protects your child in an accident.

Infants

- From birth to at least age 1 and 20 pounds (not either or).
- Use a rear-facing car seat positioned in the backseat of the car.
- Use a car seat that is appropriate for your child's weight and height.
- Read the car seat instructions.
- Use the car seat's belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. It should not move more than 1 inch side to side or front to back. Test it by grabbing the car seat at the safety belt or LATCH path.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or below the infant's shoulders. Make sure the harness is tight. You should not be able to pinch extra webbing at the shoulder.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.
- Position the car seat rear-facing and reclined no more than 45 degrees so that your baby's head stays in contact with the seat. This will make sure her airway stays open.
- Keep the baby rear-facing until at least age 1 and 20 pounds. Use a rear-facing convertible seat longer if the seat has higher weight and height limits.
- Find where the frontal airbags are in your car by checking the owner's manual. Never put a rear-facing seat in front of an active airbag.

Toddlers

- Older than age 1 and more than 20 pounds.
- Use a forward-facing car seat positioned in the back seat of your car.
- Use the right car seat with a harness for your toddler's weight and height.
- Use the car's safety belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. The seat should not move more than 1 inch from side to side or front to back.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or above the child's shoulders. Some seats require use of the top slots when the seat is forward-facing, so check instructions.
- Be sure the harness is tight. You should not be able to pinch extra webbing at the shoulder.
- Use a top tether if your vehicle and car seat are both so equipped. Tethers limit the forward motion of your child's head in a crash. If you don't have them, contact your car dealer and car seat manufacturer.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.
- A child is too big for a seat when the shoulders are above the top slots, the tops of the ears are above the back of the seat or the weight limit is exceeded. Move to a taller car seat or a booster seat. Many children will outgrow the harness of a forward-facing car seat at age 4 or 5.
- Be sure all occupants wear safety belts at all times. Children learn from adult role models.

Boosters

- 40 to 80 or 100 pounds
- Use a booster seat correctly in a back seat every time your child rides in a car.
- Older kids get weighed and measured less often than babies. Be sure to check your child's growth a few times a year.
- Use a booster seat until your child weight between 80 and 100 pounds, is about 4'9" tall, and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test. This is usually between the ages 8 and 12.
- Inform all drivers who transport your child that booster seat use is a must when your child is in their vehicle.
- A booster seat uses no harness. Instead, it uses the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts only. Be sure the safety belt is properly buckled.
- Booster seats are not installed tightly. They sit on the vehicle seat. The child buckles the lap and shoulder belt and wears the safety belt like you do. Never use only the lap belt.
- Use the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts on every booster seat. Never place the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.

Safety Belts

- Move children from booster seats to safety belts in a back seat only after the Safety Belt Fit Test is passed in every vehicle. Return your child to a booster seat if the safety belt does not fit properly.
- Use the Safety Belt Fit Test on any child you transport in your car.
- Ensure that all kids sit upright when using safety belts. Do not allow children to lean against windows or car doors or lie down. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind their back.
- Inform every driver who transports your child that safety belt use is a must.
- Teach your child to use a safety belt in a back seat in every vehicle he or she travels in.
- Wear your safety belt as a role model for your child.

Safety Belt Fit Test

1. Have your child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do his or her knees bend at the front edge of the seat? If they bend naturally, go to #2. If they don't, return to booster seat.
2. Buckle the lap and shoulder belt. Be sure the lap belt lies on the upper legs or hips. If it does, go to #3. If it lies on the stomach, return to the booster seat.
3. Be sure the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collarbone. If it does, go to #4. If it's on the face or neck, return to the booster seat. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
4. Check whether your child maintains the correct seating position for as long as you are in the car. If your child slouches or shifts positions so the safety belt touches the face, neck, or stomach, return your child to the booster seat.

Activity

For this activity you will need to take a little field trip out to your car. Demonstrate for the mothers in your group how to correctly install a car seat. Once you are done, encourage them to get their car seats checked.

The Utah County Health Department has free car seat classes and car seat checks. You can call the Utah County Health Department at 801-851-7035 or 801-851-7068 to set up an appointment.

Suggested Reading

Berenstain Baby Bears: My Trusty Car Seat
By Stan Berenstain

References

Safe Kids Worldwide, www.usa.safekids.org

Utah County Health Department, <http://www.co.utah.ut.us/dept/health/>

Facts About Car Seats

The BEST place to go for car seat information is the Instruction Manual of the car seat and the Owner's Manual to your car. They will teach you which type of seat belt system you have and how to install your car seat correctly.

INFANT SEATS (Rear-Facing Only) – For children between 5 & 22 pounds

- Infant seats should be installed to face the rear of the vehicle.
- Never install a rear facing car seat in the front seat of a car that has an air bag.
- The carrying handle should be in the down position while driving, on most models.
- The harness straps should be snug. No slack between the collar bone and the harness.
- The retainer clip should be at armpit level.
- When choosing a car seat it is recommended to get one with a 5-point harness.
- Never place any extra padding between your child and the harness straps. That means no puffy coats, head positioners that did not come with the seat, or snow bunny outfits. In a crash these will compress and give more room for your child to slip out.
- The harness straps should come out of the seat slots at or below child's shoulders when rear facing.
- All children should remain rear facing until they reach at least one year of age and 20 pounds, although the AAP recommends a child stay rear-facing to the maximum rear facing weight limit of the car seat (usually 30 to 35 pounds).



CONVERTIBLE SEATS (Rear & Forward-Facing) – For children between 5 & 40lbs

- The harness straps should be snug, and the retainer clip should be at armpit level.
- When placed forward facing, the tether strap should be hooked to a designated anchor point. If the car does not have an anchor point, the dealer should be able to install one for you.
- When placed forward facing the harness straps should be moved to the reinforced slots (top slots) on most convertible seats. The seat must be moved to the upright position.
- The harness straps should come out of the seat slots at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.



COMBINATION SEATS (Forward-Facing Only) – For children over 1 year and between 20 & 80lbs

- The harness straps should be snug, and the retainer clip should be at armpit level.
- When placed forward facing, the tether strap should be hooked to a designated anchor point. If the car does not have an anchor point, the dealer should be able to install one for you.
- The straps should come out of the seat slots at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.
- After 40lbs the seat can be converted into a belt positioning booster seat. Refer to car seat owners manual.



BOOSTER SEATS (Forward-Facing Only) – For children under 4'9" and between 40 and 80lbs

- Booster seats require a lap AND shoulder belt.
- All children under 4'9" and between 40 and 80 pounds should ride in a booster seat.
- Keep in mind that regular seat belts are designed to fit men who are 5'10" and who weigh 160 pounds. A child under 4'9" will not fit correctly in a seat belt alone.
- Booster seats are not designed to be used with a lap belt only.
- Use a backless booster if your vehicle has an adjustable headrest, use a high back booster if your vehicle has no head protection for the child (bench seat).



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT 851-7035 OR 851-7068

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration www.nhtsa.gov

Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org

A decorative border of handprints in various shades of gray surrounds the central text area.

Top 10 Car Seat Tips

Utah County Health Department

1. Car seats should not move more than 1 inch side to side or toward the front of the car.
2. No more than 1 finger width should fit between the child's harness and their collarbone.
3. Infant seats should recline to a 45-degree angle—a rolled up towel in the crack of the vehicle seat will help with proper recline.
4. Position harness retainer clip at armpit level of the child.
5. Remove all items not purchased as part of the car seat (i.e. bulky coats, head positioners).
6. Secure car seat carrying handle in down position behind the head.
7. Secure seat belt in locked mode-see vehicle owner's manual.
8. Harness straps on the car seat should be positioned at or below child's shoulders when rear facing and at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.
9. Keep your child rear facing until 1 year AND 20 pounds in an infant seat OR 30 pounds in a convertible seat.
10. Children between 40-80 pounds and under 4'9" should remain in a booster seat.

A decorative border of handprints in various shades of gray surrounds the central text area.

Top 10 Car Seat Tips

Utah County Health Department

1. Car seats should not move more than 1 inch side to side or toward the front of the car.
2. No more than 1 finger width should fit between the child's harness and their collarbone.
3. Infant seats should recline to a 45-degree angle—a rolled up towel in the crack of the vehicle seat will help with proper recline.
4. Position harness retainer clip at armpit level of the child.
5. Remove all items not purchased as part of the car seat (i.e. bulky coats, head positioners).
6. Secure car seat carrying handle in down position behind the head.
7. Secure seat belt in locked mode-see vehicle owner's manual.
8. Harness straps on the car seat should be positioned at or below child's shoulders when rear facing and at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.
9. Keep your child rear facing until 1 year AND 20 pounds in an infant seat OR 30 pounds in a convertible seat.
10. Children between 40-80 pounds and under 4'9" should remain in a booster seat.

A decorative border of handprints in various shades of gray surrounds the central text area.

Top 10 Car Seat Tips

Utah County Health Department

1. Car seats should not move more than 1 inch side to side or toward the front of the car.
2. No more than 1 finger width should fit between the child's harness and their collarbone.
3. Infant seats should recline to a 45-degree angle—a rolled up towel in the crack of the vehicle seat will help with proper recline.
4. Position harness retainer clip at armpit level of the child.
5. Remove all items not purchased as part of the car seat (i.e. bulky coats, head positioners).
6. Secure car seat carrying handle in down position behind the head.
7. Secure seat belt in locked mode-see vehicle owner's manual.
8. Harness straps on the car seat should be positioned at or below child's shoulders when rear facing and at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.
9. Keep your child rear facing until 1 year AND 20 pounds in an infant seat OR 30 pounds in a convertible seat.
10. Children between 40-80 pounds and under 4'9" should remain in a booster seat.

A decorative border of handprints in various shades of gray surrounds the central text area.

Top 10 Car Seat Tips

Utah County Health Department

1. Car seats should not move more than 1 inch side to side or toward the front of the car.
2. No more than 1 finger width should fit between the child's harness and their collarbone.
3. Infant seats should recline to a 45-degree angle—a rolled up towel in the crack of the vehicle seat will help with proper recline.
4. Position harness retainer clip at armpit level of the child.
5. Remove all items not purchased as part of the car seat (i.e. bulky coats, head positioners).
6. Secure car seat carrying handle in down position behind the head.
7. Secure seat belt in locked mode-see vehicle owner's manual.
8. Harness straps on the car seat should be positioned at or below child's shoulders when rear facing and at or above child's shoulders when forward facing.
9. Keep your child rear facing until 1 year AND 20 pounds in an infant seat OR 30 pounds in a convertible seat.
10. Children between 40-80 pounds and under 4'9" should remain in a booster seat.