



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
830 Scenic Drive, P.O. Box 3271, Modesto, CA 95353
Fax: (209) 558-8320
www.hsahealth.org

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CONTACT: Heather Duvall
PHONE: (209) 558-6833



Child Passenger Safety Week 2018

Free Resources for Parents to Ensure Children's Safety: *Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Keep Baby Safe Program Highlights Car Seat Safety During Child Passenger Safety Week*

Every day in America, millions of parents and caregivers travel with children in their vehicles. While some children are buckled-in properly in the correct car seats for their ages and sizes – most are not, if they are buckled up at all. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 46 percent of car seats are misused. To help combat this issue, Stanislaus County Health Services Agency (SCHSA) announced today its participation in Child Passenger Safety Week, a NHTSA-sponsored campaign dedicated to helping parents and caregivers make sure their children ride as safely as possible – every trip, every time. Child Passenger Safety Week runs from September 23-29, 2018, with events hosted throughout the week to raise awareness about the dangers children face when they are not buckled up properly.

"Every 33 seconds in 2016, a child under 13 was involved in a passenger vehicle crash," said Heather Duvall, Community Wellness and Prevention Manager for Stanislaus County. "Using car seats that are age- and size-appropriate is the best way to keep your children safe." According to NHTSA, motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of children, and fatalities are on the rise. Car seats, booster seats, and seat belts can make all the difference. "In 2016, there were 328 children under the age of 5 saved because they were in a car seat," Duvall said. "Car seats matter, and having the right car seat installed and used the right way is critical." She added that too often parents move their children to the front seat before they should, which increases the risk of injury and death even if they are buckled up. The safest place for all kids under 13 is always in the back seat. Also, according to NHTSA, in 2015, about 25.8 percent of children 4 to 7 who should have been riding in booster seats were prematurely moved to seat belts, and 11.6 percent were unbuckled altogether.

"It's our job to keep our children safe," Duvall said. "Get your car seats checked. Make certain they're installed correctly, and that your kids are in the right seats and are buckled in properly. Even if you think your child's car seat is installed correctly, get it checked with a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, so you can be sure that your child is the safest he or she can be while traveling."

NHTSA recommends keeping children rear-facing as long as possible, up to the top height and weight allowed by their particular seats. Once a child outgrows the rear-facing-only "infant" car seat, he/she should travel in a rear-facing "convertible" or all-in-one car seat. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing size limits, the child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether. After outgrowing the forward-facing car seat with harness, children should be placed in booster seats until they're the right size to use seat belts safely. Additionally, always remember to register your car seat and booster seat with the car seat manufacturer so you can be notified in the event of a recall. Parents and caregivers can view more information on car seat safety and locate a certified technician at nhtsa.gov/carseat.

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SCHSA's Keep Baby Safe program, in collaboration with Safe Kids Stanislaus County (SKS), are reminding parents and caregivers to Buckle Up, Every Ride, Every Time. To close out the week, SCHSA and SKS will hold a car seat inspection event on Saturday, September 29, 2018, at the parking lot of Yancey Home Center located at 1632 N. St., Newman, CA. The inspection event is free to the community and runs from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Certified child passenger safety technicians will be available to provide education to parents and child caregivers on the importance of proper installation and correct use of child restraints and booster seats. All interested parents and child caregivers are encouraged to come by.

Other car seat education inspection events are scheduled throughout the year. For more information on car seat safety classes and car seat inspection events, please call the Keep Baby Safe Program at 209-558-5657.

Funding for this child safety seat education and installation program is provided to Stanislaus County Health Services Agency by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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