

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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## **Safety Seat Checkup Scheduled at Babies R Us in Van Nuys**

VAN NUYS, CA (September 21, 2009) – Motor vehicle crashes still kill more children than any other cause of death – yet **more than ninety percent** of kids are buckled up incorrectly.

In 2007, 188 child passengers age 14 and under died and 20,239 were injured as a result of vehicle crashes in California. Research shows that 84% of the crashes in which children are involved are within 20 minutes of home! More than 80% of the small children killed would have survived if they had been properly buckled up.

Parents are being offered the opportunity to have their children’s safety seats inspected at a **safety seat checkup** Tuesday, October 6, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., in the parking lot at Babies R Us, 7886 N. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys. Parents and caregivers can call the Safe Ride Helpline, (310) 222-6860, weekday afternoons, to make an advance checkup appointment. . Families without appointments will be helped if possible, but there could be a wait of more than an hour.

“This is a great opportunity for families to check that their kids are riding safely,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Most safety seats are used incorrectly, but many parents don’t realize that their kids are at risk in the car. I hope that many local families will come and find out if their children are well protected.”

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Teams of nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and other trained volunteers will inspect each safety seat to make sure it fits the child properly, is correctly secured, and is in the safest possible location in the vehicle. Older children will be invited to try the 5-Step Test to find out if they fit properly in the vehicle safety belts or need a booster.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. conducts free safety seat checkups throughout the year at various locations as a part of a training program for health and safety professionals. At the last checkup in Van Nuys, in 2005, 93% of children who attended were not properly buckled up. Even well educated, safety-conscious parents often make unsuspected mistakes that can result in serious injuries to their children.

California law requires children to ride in a safety seat or booster, in the back seat, until they are at least six years old or weigh 60 pounds. However, most children need a booster for proper belt fit until they are at least age 10 to 12, depending on their proportions and the design of the vehicle. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. recommends that children ride in the back seat, which is 40% safer than the front, until they are old enough to drive.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national non-profit organization dedicated to child passenger safety and was founded in 1980 by fifteen Los Angeles area safety advocates. The organization is nationally recognized for technical expertise and program excellence. The checkup is made possible with funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more information, go to [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org) or call the Safe Ride Helpline: (310)222-6860 or (800)745-SAFE. For Spanish: (310)222-6862 or (800)747-SANO.

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