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Parents Warned of Risk to Kids in Day Care

New program offers child care providers free child passenger safety training

TORRANCE, CA (February 7, 2007) – Just in time for National Child Passenger Safety Week (February 11 – 17), parents with kids in day care, and the child care providers who care for them, are being warned of an often overlooked risk to children’s safety – failing to buckle up properly in caregivers’ cars or vans.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of children are transported to and from day care in the cars of their child care providers. Most of these workers have no training in safe transport of children, and many children are incorrectly buckled up.

The risks to children in child care have led the National Transportation Safety Board to call for comprehensive oversight of child care transportation by all fifty states.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is partnering with Crystal Stairs and Connections for Children to combat this risk by providing free training to child care providers, teaching them how to select and use car seats and safety belts correctly. The first training sessions, funded by California Kids’ Plates, are scheduled for March 3 (in English) and March 31 (in Spanish).

“Making sure that children are safe on the road is a major concern for parents and child care providers,” says Stephanie Tombrello, LCSW, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director. “Child care providers who transport children are legally responsible for ensuring that they are correctly restrained – but all of the providers’ seats that have been checked at previous events have had errors with their installation. Many caregivers need help in ensuring that they are transporting kids correctly, and parents need to know how to check that their children are safe on the road. Most crashes occur close to home on surface streets.

“Anyone who transports children is responsible for buckling them up correctly. Failure to do so could result in a ticket for more than \$350. If a child care provider is involved in a crash, the financial liability could be tremendous. And, of course, for anyone who cares about children, their safety is priceless.”

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At the SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. workshop, child care providers will learn:

- How to select and use car seats, booster seats, and safety belts for all children in their care.
- How to install the seats in their own cars correctly.
- How to ensure that their safety seats meet federal standards and have not been recalled.

The program will begin with workshops on **March 3** and **March 31** at Connections for Children in Santa Monica. To register, child care providers should call (562) 696-0208, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon.

Parents are encouraged to ensure that anyone who transports their children follows some basic safety rules:

- Transport babies and toddlers in a five-point-harness car seat. Babies should stay rear facing until age 18 – 24 months, then sit forward facing until they reach the maximum weight and height for the seat.
- Use a booster seat until the child fits properly in a regular safety belt. Most children under age 8 – 10 need a booster.
- Make sure that the child restraint is tightly installed in the back seat of the car and the child is securely strapped into the seat on every ride. Be aware that 90% of car seats inspected at safety seat checkups are incorrectly used, significantly reducing the protection offered to children.
- Talk to your child care provider about how your child would be transported in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure that all adults who transport your children set a good example by fastening their own safety belts on every trip.

This program is funded with proceeds from sales of the “Kids’ Plates,” vehicle license plates that can feature a heart, a star, a hand or a plus sign. Kids’ Plates are California vehicle specialty license plates that generate funds for child injury and abuse prevention and child care health and safety programs. Proceeds from Kids’ Plates sales are distributed to child injury prevention (25%), child abuse prevention (25%), and child care health and safety (50%) programs. This project was among 31 grants awarded to California injury prevention programs. Kids’ Plates with a personal message cost just \$50 to begin and \$40 per yearly renewal. For more information, call 1-800-HEY-KIDS or go to [www.http://kidsplates.org](http://kidsplates.org).