



Child Passenger Safety Week: Is Your Child Secured Properly?

Whether dropping children off at school, taking them to a play date or on an errand, it is no secret that parents' and caregivers' days are packed with activities. But they should never be too busy to properly secure a child in a safety seat.

The National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that car crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. Many times, injuries and deaths can be prevented by proper use of car seats, boosters and seat belts.

Selecting the correct child safety seat and learning how to use it properly can be overwhelming for parents. Safety-minded organizations throughout the U.S., including ThinkFirst, are working together to make sure every parent and caregiver feels confident and knows how to properly install and secure their child in a car safety seat.

The week of September 15 to 21 has been designated as Child Passenger Safety Week. Parents and caregivers are invited to tap into free resources to learn how to better protect children by properly selecting, installing and using a child safety seat. The events being offered include car-seat checkups, car-seat registration, educational workshops, and inspection stations. They will be provided at health and safety fairs and other community events.

Taking part in such a program is a way for a safety and injury prevention professional to make a significant difference in the lives of the families they serve.

"No one ever wants to see a parent lose a child. Child passenger safety technicians (CPST) and instructors (CPSTI) help save lives by teaching parents how to properly restrain a child in a vehicle," says Susan Crotty, ThinkFirst Program Development Manager, CPST.

As part of the week, National Seat Check Saturday will take place on September 21 and will allow parents and caregivers the opportunity to have their child safety seats checked to be sure they are the correct seat for their child's age, weight and height. In addition, any parent who is having trouble installing a car seat or wants to check if it is installed correctly will be able to ask a child passenger safety technician (CPST) for help. CPSTs have been specially trained to provide guidance to parents and caregivers.

The benefits of teaching parents and caregivers how to better use child safety seats to protect their children against injuries in a car crash cannot be underestimated. NHTSA estimates that car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants (younger than 1 year old) and by 54% for toddlers (1 to 4 years old) in passenger cars. NHTSA also estimates that the lives of 325 children under age 5 were saved by car seats in 2017.

“This is such an important thing to get right,” says Crotty. “Be sure you are installing your child’s seat correctly and that you are securing them in the device correctly to offer the best protection.”

To learn more about car seats and to locate an inspection station in your area go to www.nhtsa.gov/carseat.