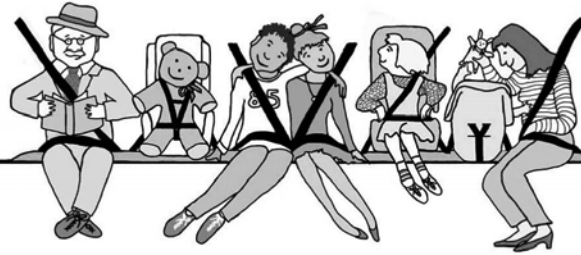


# SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 30, No. 4

July 2009



## Data on Non-Traffic Auto-Related Incidents

“We know all too well that the human body cannot win in a confrontation with an automobile,” wrote Janette Fennell, founder/President of Kids and Cars, which led the battle to legislate National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to collect data on non-traffic deaths and injuries related to vehicles, regardless of the location - private or public property.

As a result of the Congressional mandate to do the research, pioneered by Kids and Cars, we can perceive the serious risks reflected in a myriad of individual cases reported in local press. The *weekly* numbers are 33 deaths and 16,000 injuries from such causes as backovers, frontovers, freezing or sweltering, strangling from power windows, suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, or vehicle fires. Laws, such as the one in California which prohibits leaving children age 6 or under alone in vehicles or with other children under age 12, are a step forward; equally important are power windows that cannot be tripped in error to trap a child’s neck, now required. Not yet mandated are vehicles with sufficient tools to see the children, animals, and personal property that can be just out of sight due to the height of the current vehicle mix.

Regulatory advances need to be considered to put this devastating series of injuries to rest. Kudos to Fennell who took a personal trauma (being carjacked and placed in her car trunk) to address the issue of non-traffic vehicle risks at every level, leading to action at last in Washington, DC.

## Rear-Facing Longer

In August, 2008, Joe Peralta began a quest to find out why his safety-seated, 18-month-old, 33-lb. grandson ended up with a broken neck in a frontal crash. He learned what safety advocates and Swedish families have known for decades: rear facing is much safer for kids. As reported here, in Sweden, high-weight harness seats allow children to stay facing rear up to age 5 or longer, but such seats are not sold in the U.S. Fortunately, on the U.S. market now, every convertible seat is certified to at least 30 lbs. rear facing with 3 companies currently rating at least one to 40 lbs. back facing.

Peralta cites the SBS USA Technical Encyclopedia at [joelsjourney.org](http://joelsjourney.org) where one can see all of the information a dedicated grandfather can amass as the first year anniversary of the serious crash approaches, fortunately with good news about Joel’s progress toward full recovery.

Although the U.S. is moving toward rear facing for at least 2 years, 9 months has been typical in the U.K. A recent study in *British Medical Journal*, 6/20/09 ([bmj.com](http://bmj.com) to download full text) compiles data from studies in the U.S. and Europe supporting their recommendation to keep kids rear facing until age 4. The article points out that 70-75% of Swedish kids typically ride rear facing under age 3 and that a retrospective study of kids in crashes, 1976-96, in Sweden showed that rear facing reduced injury by 96%, forward facing, 77%.

The release of the study led to coverage on “Good Morning America,” which, although flawed in choice of seats, attachment of a booster, and praising a “giant seat” as being certified to 45 lbs.(!), made it clear that riding rear facing till age 4 was a good safety choice. On camera, Sharon Munns of Mayo Clinic put it succinctly, “Do you want to interact with them on a half an hour car ride or do you want to interact with them for the rest of their lives?”

## CALENDAR

### CONFERENCE

**\*8/29-31:** Kidz in Motion, Fort Worth, TX. ([www.kidzinmotion.org](http://www.kidzinmotion.org)) Will include SBS USA exhibit and a Round Table on current issues with Deborah Stewart and Stephanie Tombrello.

### SBS USA Educator Workshop

Call 310/222-6860, to register.  
6 CEUs for Nurses; 3 CEUs for CPSTs & CPSTIs.

\* 9/23: Altadena, CA, 8:30 am- 5 pm. Sponsor: California Office of Traffic Safety.

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\* 2009 membership year

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## Another Air Bag Death Leads to Charges

Air bag-related deaths of children have not been common for many years, but signaling that educators cannot ignore discussing the risk, a 24-year-old mother has been charged for transporting her premature infant in front, leading to the death 10 months after the infant was struck.

In Washington, state law requires back-seat travel up to age 13, in concert with the warnings placed in all motor vehicles and in all rear-facing safety seats since the 1990's. Because, fortunately, this issue is not a headline issue often, SBS USA continues to distribute a graphic Air Bag Warning flyer in every checkup packet for families.

## Did You See This?

SBS USA received a breakdown of the locations and times last winter that public television aired "Boosters Are For Big Kids," which was released in 2 parts—for kids and for adults. Thanks to a 2008 grant from Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., the videos were uploaded on satellite for all PBS stations to access.

The report about "Spotlight On: Child Passenger Safety" indicates the two were shown 970 and 988 times respectively for more than 4.1 million viewers each.

## Tips for Educators

Parents should *never* leave children alone in a vehicle. In Iowa, a parent left 2 children, 7 and 3, in a running vehicle to handle a "quick errand." The 3 year old left her safety seat and using the stick shift, sent the vehicle rolling rearward.

The 3 year old then climbed into the safety seat where she stayed as it fell out and lodged underneath the car, still protecting the child!

In another, tragic case, a parent exited a vehicle to make a telephone call in full sight of his child. As he turned to the phone, the child emerged from the safety seat and leaned his head out the power window and then tripped the mechanism, strangling in front of his powerless parent.

## Updated Flyer

In 2005, when SBS USA was first alerted to the issue of kids wrapping shoulder belts with switchable retractors around their necks or other body parts, the focus was on the LATCH-attached safety seat putting the safety belt easily in reach. By now about 50 cases, including the death of a 13 year old who was playfully miming what became his actual hanging, have been located.

Media and NHTSA reports have been combed to ferret out the incidents. The newly revised flyer, **Warning: Kids at Risk of Strangulation from Loose or Unused Belts**, at [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org), gives tips in English or Spanish to prevent future incidents. Share it with families in your care; every affected parent reported being totally unaware that kids might become entangled dangerously in a safety belt.

**You can help SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. save children's lives with your membership or donation.**

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## Recalls

**Recaro** has announced a recall for Como and Signo convertibles (model numbers start with 330 or 331) made 11/1/07 to 2/16/09. If the metal frame around the harness release lever is gold, the adjuster may be defective, allowing the front adjuster strap to slip so the harness is loose on the child. If the metal frame is silver, the adjuster is not defective. Check the adjuster by tightening the harness, then pulling on the shoulder straps to see if the harness loosens. Call 888/473-2290 or go to [recarokids.com](http://recarokids.com) for instructions to test the adjuster and to request a replacement seat, if necessary.

**Triple Play Sit'n'Stroll** seats (#4002) made on 5/5/08 have center adjuster webbing that does not comply with required breaking strength. Call 800/829-1625 for a repair kit with instructions for replacing the webbing.

***SafetyBeltSafe Social in Nashville rocks! At least that's what the 122+ visitors reported as they visited, munched, & relaxed, thanks to Nissan North America who sponsored the event for the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Alex Cardinali & Darryl Harrison were gracious hosts, sharing Nissan child passenger safety (cps) goals!***

## New Ambulance Restraint System Being Tested

Serenity Safety Products, reportedly the only company that uses FMVSS 213 crash pulse testing for a built-in ambulance seat, has engineered a "convertible" ambulance seat, usable by all ages.

The Guardian is a full seat with 3 modes and designed for ambulance use, although it weighs too much for those with weaker flooring. Kevin Gallagher shared information with SBS USA about its development, which had input from both Marilyn Bull, MD, of Riley Children's Hospital and the SafeGuard Division of IMMI, both of which have worked on this challenging area for years.

The Guardian swivels to face forward or rearward and may be used as:

- 1) an adult vehicle seat with shoulder-lap belt;
- 2) a fold-down, integrated seat with a 5-point harness for children 23-85 lbs., or
- 3) an infant-only seat that is revealed and positioned by folding down the back panel and removing the seat cushion.

The infant seat cannot be deployed unless the Guardian is locked in rear-facing mode. Visit [www.serenitysafetyproducts.com](http://www.serenitysafetyproducts.com) to view a video.

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**SafetyBeltSafe News**

**July 2009**

## **New and Discontinued Safety Seats**

**Britax Chaperone**, rear-facing only for 4-30 lbs., has a no-thread, 5-point (pt) harness, front adjuster strap, 2 crotch slots, rebound bar, optional base, & variable harness length, based on which set of loops is hooked to the splitter plate. An adjuster on the back is slid up or down, changing the level of the harness & headrest.

**Britax Advocate CS**, a convertible for 5 to 35 lbs. rear facing, up to 65 lbs. forward facing, has a 5-pt, no-thread harness & front adjuster strap. Turning a knob on the side of the seat adjusts shoulder harness & headrest. To reduce side impact crash energy by 50%, it has air-filled, energy-management cushions on the outside of the child seat, protecting both the child’s head & adjacent passengers. A convertible, **Britax Roundabout 50** fits 5 to 35 lbs. rear facing & up to 50 lbs. forward facing. The 5-pt harness has 4 sets of shoulder strap slots & a front adjuster strap. All current Britax seats have click-on lower LATCH connectors & belt lock-offs.

**Combi Coccoro**, a convertible used rear facing 5-33 lbs., forward facing up to 40 lbs., has a 5-pt harness with 4 sets of shoulder strap slots, front adjuster strap, & belt lock-offs. Weighing only 11 lbs., its compact design fits smaller vehicles & aircraft.

**Safety 1st Complete Air**, a convertible by **Dorel**, has their new “Air Protect” system. In a side impact, air-filled cushions shield the head. The seat can be used rear facing 5 to 40 lbs., forward facing up to 50 lbs. The shoulder level of the 5-point harness can be adjusted from the front, the headrest is adjustable, & lower LATCH connectors are click-ons.

**Graco MyRide 65**, a side-impact-tested convertible, is used rear facing 5-40 lbs., forward facing up to 65 lbs. The 5-point harness has a front adjuster strap, 5 shoulder strap slots, & a single crotch strap location. The length of the harness is changed by selecting 1 of 3 sets of loops to be attached to the splitter plate. **Graco** will stop producing the **Assura**, an institutional infant-only seat without a base or handle. It is the only low-cost infant seat with no specified minimum weight. Graco will accept orders through at least 8/09.

**Learning Curve True Fit** convertible now has a **Premier Signature** version, Model #C670. The Premier model has multiple recline positions for forward or rear facing & a rebound bar that can be flipped up for rear-facing use. Like the original model, it can be used 5-35 lbs. rear facing, up to 65 lbs. forward facing, & has a removable headrest for better rear-facing fit in small cars. It has a 5-point, no-thread harness, 2 crotch slots, front adjuster strap, & belt lock-offs. The shoulder harness is changed by pulling the yellow release handles out, then sliding them up or down. Replacing previous infant seat models, **Learning Curve Via #I450** has a modified handle recommended (for this model only) to be placed in the forward position, very close to the vehicle seat back, so it acts as a rebound bar. However, if preferred, the handle may be placed behind the seat, all the way down. The Via I450 is for facing rear 4-22 lbs. only and has a 5-point harness with front adjuster strap, an adjustment knob to change the harness level, and requires use with the base, which has a belt lock-off.

All **Sunshine Kids Radian** convertibles (65, 80, and XT) can be used rear facing up to 40 lbs.; the change is retroactive for seats made September 2008 or later.

All of the new safety seats introduced recently have energy-absorbing foam, although the type of foam and extent of the foam liner vary. Most manufacturers are conducting some type of side-impact testing voluntarily, although there is no federal standard.