

# SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 31, No. 6



November 2010

## SBS USA Empowered to Teach Appropriate Belt Fit

Exciting times for getting the word out on the 5-Step Test as the way to know whether or not a child needs a booster since CA Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is funding SBS USA to continue with the initial program in Glendora, CA, while developing a presentation to encourage other communities to get involved. Perhaps mother Ana Maria Venegas best explained how to do it: "I had no idea of the risk and the way boosters help but now I can't help stopping other parents to tell them---at the market, in the parking lot, at school."

The Glendora program concentrates on elementary school education. Components include kids jointly learning to recognize better belt fit with boosters; parents, that boosters are needed much longer; and through local kids, engaged by teens and local service group chapters, extending the message to community events. The service groups, teens as teachers, and new posters decorated with homework drawings from local kids reflect the increasing store of data on how long it takes for belts to fit kids correctly. From 2/08 to 10/10, SBS USA data cover 1881 youngsters from 2 to 13, primarily 4 to 11. The results show none fit until age 6, 2 of 371 fit at age 7, and 5% fit at age 8. At age 10, 51% fit but even at 12, a quarter did not. Parents tend to focus on the shoulder belt, but the lap belt is more likely to cause damage because of poor fit.

The exciting outcome of year 1 is a DVD created by Cable 3 of Glendora not only for TV and Web site presentation but also to be distributed to first and third graders in the district!

The recently concluded Kids' Plates grant to pilot an online educational program for first time expectant parents, Ride Safe from the Start, allowed SBS USA to test its efficacy in reducing incorrect use. Comparing the outcomes of 50 families without the program and 150 with it, we found a reduction in average number of errors per seat from 4.8 to 1.4. Not only were errors fewer but, in general, less serious.

The initial program is undergoing revisions with help from Toyota North America funding; with OTS support, SBS USA will partner with CA agencies to license the service in CA through September, 2011. The initial program focuses on how to select and use seats for newborns, including a series of quizzes so users know they have understood the program.

## Funders Expand Pilot Programs

For 2011, with OTS funds, *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. will expand the program in Glendora and create a presentation for community members in other cities to view.

Newly awarded Kids' Plates funding for 20 months will enable Los Angeles County start-ups of the booster program in Pasadena, West Covina, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Azusa.

Any school or service group that wants to explore joining in the campaign to reduce kids' injuries is invited to get in touch. In each community, we'll hold a safety seat checkup to outreach to families with younger children while focusing on changing the perception of how long most kids will need a booster before achieving belt fit.

*Many families will be traveling during the busy holiday season. This is a crucial time to highlight Child Passenger Safety (CPS) in our local communities.*

## What Are Kids' Plates?

Ordering a CA license plate, identified by a heart, hand, plus or star, contributes funding to expanding injury and child abuse prevention and licensing inspections of child care facilities.

The plate may be personalized or simply bear one of the symbols. The extra cost is small; however, in lean times, having a funding stream enables new and continuing programs to thrive.

Sales of Kids' Plates have raised \$32 million since debuting in 1992. Click on the link at [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org) home page and support CA kids. Would such a program work in your state?

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*Have you checked out our Web site lately? At [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org), we offer updated recall lists and calendars, resources for parents, technicians, and media representatives, and more.*

*You'll find renewal forms, downloadable program materials, and past issues of SafetyBeltSafe News, along with inspiring stories and tips for safer air travel.*

## SPECIAL HOLIDAY REMINDER

Alcohol can bring disaster if an impaired driver takes the wheel with a child in tow. Please pass on the rarely understood fact: the majority of children killed in DUI incidents are riding *with* the impaired driver.

Of the 216 DUI-related deaths of 14 year olds and younger (totaling 1347 in 2008), almost half (99) were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of .08 or higher. Many who work with problem drinkers may not be focused on child passenger safety nor looking into this aspect of the family picture.

Spread the word; children rarely can resist on their own riding with adult family or friends.

## Food for Thought for Technicians

Much has been made of reports that switchable retractors must be left in the emergency locking position when safety seats have lock-offs. Investigating, we learned this is specifically aimed at preventing breakage of the lock-off. For parents, it also may be easier to use the lock-off only.

However, if one wishes to switch the belt, install the seat properly with the lock-off and then, simply pull out the shoulder belt fully *without* attempting to get more slack out of the rest of the belt. Similarly, if one switches the belt first and tries to use the lock-off next, it is likely to put additional stress on the lock-off, possibly damaging it.

## Calendar

**Lifesavers 2011, Phoenix, AZ:**  
March 26-29. Log on to [www.lifesaversconference.org](http://www.lifesaversconference.org) to register.

**Safety Seat Checkup Week:**  
April 10 - 16, 2011

**Safety Seat Checkup Day:**  
Sat. April 16, 2011.  
Petersen Automotive Museum,  
Los Angeles

**National Transportation Safety Board: Public Forum on CPS on Aircraft and in Cars:**  
December 9, 2010. For details, go to: [www.nts.gov/children](http://www.nts.gov/children)  
Test for Webcast compatibility or attend in person.

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

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**Ford Explorer Shoulder Belt Air Bag Arrives**

A year ago, we announced the new technology as testing well with safety seats with harnesses and ideal for boosters. (The air bag fills with cold gas that increases distribution of crash forces over a wider area and helps support the head and neck.) However, already this year, there are safety seat instructions from Britax that ban use of the belt with a safety seat. There are concerns that with the many varieties of shoulder belt guides, lock-offs, belt paths that wind through bases or under tabs, the belt and safety seats might not mix well. Until specific testing is revealed, it seems likely this innovation will have limited use.  
 Buckling the belt readies the system. Therefore, if this belt is buckled to prevent entanglement of a curious toddler or dramatic youngster, unbuckle it when it is lodged tightly behind the safety seat.

***Do You Remember the SBS USA Museum Exhibit?***

Toyota USA Automobile Museum has expanded in Torrance, California, and our 5-Step Test exhibit has been refurbished. Sporting new Graco TurboBooster, Evenflo AMP, and Britax Parkway is the rear seat of a Corolla, cut down to make it easy for kids themselves to do the 5-Step Test. SBS USA brochures and posters are on hand.  
 Next to the exhibit is the 1991 Lexus LS 400 where Janette Fennell and her husband were locked in the trunk in a San Francisco carjacking incident 13 years ago, leading Janette to revolutionize the view of non-crash, vehicle-related injuries and deaths. Spurred by their experience, Janette went on to champion requiring every trunk from 2002 on have a visible release for escape, reducing deaths in trunks to zero in these vehicles. Kids and Cars has taken on power window systems, forgotten infants in cars, and the need for better visibility to reduce back-over and front-over tragedies.  
 The museum has a range of vehicles, from the original 1958 Toyopet Crown and 1961 Landcruiser on. We are very happy that our safety issues have a place there. For museum tours, open M -Th, call Susan Sanborn, Museum Curator, 310/468-4728.

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*Gift memberships are available this holiday season. Bring safety home.*

**SafetyBeltSafe News**

**November 2010**

## **Recalls and Replacement Parts**

**Evenflo Maestro** (model numbers starting with 310), made 12/17/09 to 4/26/10, could crack at the front of the plastic shell near the harness adjuster if involved in a crash. Call 800/233-5921 for a reinforcement bracket. Do not use the seat with the harness until repaired; may be used as a booster for children over 40 lbs.

**Britax Chaperone** (E9L69N9, E9L69P2, E9L69P3, E9L69P5), made 4/1/09 to 5/31/10, has a chest clip that may break when engaged, causing risk of laceration or choking on small piece. Call 888/427-4829 for new chest clip.

**Britax Advocate 70 CS, Boulevard 70, Boulevard 70 CS, Marathon 70, Roundabout 55**, made before 7/30/10, may be difficult to install with two lock-offs, as required, if the button on the vehicle belt interferes with one of the lock-offs. Call 888/427-4829 to receive friction strips so a single lock-off may be used. For seats made 7/30/10 to 10/4/10, call for revised instructions to use only the lock-off next to the buckle (friction material present). This is a free replacement part, not a recall.

## **Revised Tools On Tap!**

Bright pink LATCH manual is being replaced by a new revision, color not yet revealed, to bring the latest news on tethers and lower anchors from the Safe Ride News Publications team. Place your order now at [www.saferidenews.com](http://www.saferidenews.com).

SBS USA soon will be releasing the newest CD of Manufacturers' Instructions, covering instructions and product summary sheets back for 10 years. Single copies, \$15, including shipping; orders of 100 or more available at reduced rates.

## **New Products**

**Britax Parkway SGL** is a booster with adjustable headrest and removable back for 40-120 lbs. Like the Parkway SG, it has an adjustable strap to keep the lap belt low, but SGL also has lower LATCH connectors.

**Combi Kobuk Air Thru** is a booster with adjustable headrest and removable back for children 33-125 lbs.

**Dorel Comfy Carry** is a rear-facing-only seat for 4-22 lbs. with a 5-point harness. It has 4 sets of harness slots and 3 crotch strap locations. Various models have adjustable or non-adjustable base and front or rear harness adjustment.

**Sunshine Kids Santa Fe** is a backless booster with lower LATCH connectors for 30-120 lbs.

## **LATCH Tip**

When Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children came on the scene nearly a decade ago, lower anchors were designated for use to 48 lbs. Seats on the shelves had harness systems to 40 lbs.

Today, there is major variability. Although National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) now mandates safety restraints up to 65 lbs. to meet their safety standards, there is no simple way to rate the vehicle Lower Anchor bars by child's weight. Instead focus on the owner's manuals. Many state to follow the safety seat instructions; use the safety belt if those don't allow use above the original 48 lbs. And order the new LATCH manual soon!

## CPS Around the World

In our previous issue, reports from the Kidz in Motion Conference, held in August, 2010 in Texas, included initial comments on CPS approaches and standards beyond the United States. For instance, retainer/chest clips are an American phenomenon. Starting with the UK and Sweden, we addressed some basics, promising more this month based on *Safe Ride News* Editor Denise Donaldson's presentation.



She noted, in the UK, routing the shoulder belt around the back of the rear-facing seat shell is typical, an option available here on the Combi Cocorro. Some seats route the lap belt around the front below the child and through a slot at the top of the shell; the former was the original pattern for the American crash-tested General Motors Child Love Seat, which required a tether, in the 1970's.



In Sweden, as often stated, rear facing is the goal up to 50 lbs.+, with kids moving next to boosters. As the dashboard in front is the strongest internal structure, air bags are turned off so the safety seats can rest against it. Donaldson visited Sakta Car Seat Store, Stockholm, where Robert Bell, originally of Britax, UK, sells 10% of Swedish safety seats, providing education, installing tether anchors, and recommending dual tethers to reduce rebound. Lock-offs are used as vehicles lack switchable retractors; seats, as in the UK, may be ISOFIX- or belt-restrained, both options are not required. An example, Duologic, fits well in smaller cars; the shell sits in a metal base with head restraint, rebound bar, and foot prop but easily lifts out. Imagine a store like this. Van Nuys, CA, once had a similar facility; however, Safer Baby had to drop safety seats as shoppers picked staff brains and went away to buy products more cheaply!



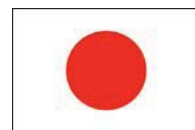
European countries, following ECE R44.04, may even, like Austria with age 14, 4'11", have laws surpassing the standard, but Donaldson reported major reduction in seat use after age 4. Austria had more energy-absorbing shields on their forward-facing seats. We may see such a seat re-introduced in the U.S.



Australia and New Zealand have similar regulations. The former recently updated their historically leading-edge approach to Road Rules to require safety seat use to age 7 but this year, added Type F, a booster for kids 4 to 10. Side-impact testing began in 2004. In type, they focus on "capsules," all with bases, for rear-facing infants, products that move upward to protect the child's head and spine, in a crash; the Century SmartMove convertible (1994-2002) used similar technology in the U.S. The capsule is tethered "Australian-style" to the anchor behind the vehicle seat; tether anchors are on motor coaches, too. Children turn forward at about 6 months; forward-facing design includes separate harnesses with guides to keep the lap belt away from the crotch or harnesses that are used with boosters. An item, "belt converter" or "gated buckle," that looks similar to a locking clip, is used to bring the shoulder belt away from the child when the harness is used, instead of the typical belt only.



Japan adheres to ECE R44, has stages similar to the UK, a law covering children under age 6, and many seats which rotate, similar to the Combi Zeus 360 sold in the U.S. China, on the other hand, has no regulations or laws, few vehicles with ISOFIX, and among its 1.3 billion population, a majority of families with one child. Traditionally, aged relatives are supported by younger ones, which paired with an increase in personal vehicular travel, makes urgent a major change in attitude about child restraint use.



Closer to home, Canada has rules similar to the U.S. standards except that tethering for forward-facing has been mandatory for more than 20 years. CAM wraps are not allowed; fewer high-weight harness systems are available but it appears that is changing. To the south, Mexico and Latin America often have laws for children to buckle up but lack enforcement. Many countries are working on laws. Boosters are virtually unknown.



Kidz in Motion will return to Orlando, Florida, August 10-12, 2011.



# SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

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To: Our Valued SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A Members and Friends

From: Bonnie Oseas, President

It has never been more important for us to hear that you are lending your support for our program to keep child passenger safety messages before the public. The opportunities are great because the safety seat industry has produced an exceptional range of product choices and the automotive industry is incorporating ever more technology that is both life-saving and crash-reducing. All of these advances make it possible to continue the downward trends of deaths and injuries.

Yet we still have news like this:

Palm Springs, CA: "Evelyn Giselle Pinto [16 months] of Phoenix, Arizona, who was pronounced dead at the scene of the crash, had been strapped into a safety seat, but officers determined the seat was not properly belted into the truck. Three other people in the vehicle were unhurt."

Such reports make us strive to re-double our efforts. And we offer you benefits to help you increase your effectiveness with those you serve.

We offer *SafetyBeltSafe News*, meriting 1 CEU for Technicians, to all members. Those at the \$50 level also receive a code to download our Recall List, most comprehensive in the U.S. At \$100, we add a code to reach our special Web page with all of the new instructions added throughout the year. At \$200, members add on the latest CD of Manufacturers' Instructions, *Safe Ride News*, 100 free brochures, and, to FOUR additional locations, copies of *SafetyBeltSafe News*. However, working with *Safe Ride News*, we are offering a Special Package for Technicians at the \$100 level to receive the CD and *Safe Ride News* for just an additional \$35. From October 1 on, memberships expire December 31, 2011.

We developed the different membership levels because you, our supporters, range widely in why you have joined our campaign and what you need from us. But ALWAYS, our mission, like yours, is to save children's lives through the correct, consistent use of safety seats and belts. Help us keep our tools current to help your efforts and our outreach, potent. Renew NOW for 2011. We appreciate you—and your support.