

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 32, No. 3

May 2011



How Is Behavior Changed?

The startling result of a study by Suzanne Brixey et al in *Injury Prevention*, 2011, of the effect of a new state law to increase booster use in Wisconsin underscores the need for ongoing, targeted education to make change more uniform.

Observing buckle-up behavior in waves, the research indicated substantial improvement with overall booster use growing to 43% from 24%, but only white families showed significant improvement in overall booster use. Meanwhile, *correct* booster use rose from 48% to 68% for white families, plummeted from 18% to 10% in African-American areas, and stayed at 10% in Latino communities.

Due to residential neighborhoods being mostly ethnically/racially skewed in Milwaukee, it was concluded that without specific educational interventions, families behaved like their neighbors. To move from legal improvement to improved protection requires suitable educational and enforcement components to bring the message home.

A 2nd study reported in *Injury Prevention*, 2011, "Predicting Parents' Use of Booster Seats," by Bruce et al also found a major impact from perceived behavioral patterns of community peers in Canada. While recognizing boosters as important safety promoters was most important, social norms rank very high. "Our data findings that the injury prevention benefits of using a booster seat are strong predictors of intent to use, suggest that [such] messages...could ... have more potential effect if spread across different levels in the community, including schools, recreation facilities and community organizations, establishing a social norm."

AAP Updates Policy

Leading pediatricians have long espoused "best practice" in child passenger safety (CPS), but it takes time for any large entity to declare universal policy. March, 2011, marked the official beginning for American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supporting the back seat location until age 13; rear-facing travel until at least age 2; delaying booster seat use until kids fully outgrow seats with internal harnesses; encouraging booster seat use until at least ages 8-12, depending on fit; and espousing the concept that safety is demoted at each stage, not a sign of graduation.

Although SBS USA prefers to recommend the back seat until age 15 when kids are learning to drive, based on the 2005 research paper by Drs. Newgard and Lewis, having pediatricians promoting best practice should give CPS a boost nationally.

Ride Safe from the Start.

SBS USA is pleased to report that access to our online program for first-time expectant parents, through September, 2011, is available to California programs, underwritten by an Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant. This gives facilities a chance to experiment with the best ways to promote its use for their clients.

The initial study, supported by CA Kids' Plates, that accompanied the creation of the program showed a substantial reduction in errors between users and a control group. SBS USA recommends that facility staff "expect" prenatal patients to use the program to encourage participation by those not perceiving risk from incorrect use. A national version of the program is also available to be licensed by facilities in other states. Call SBS USA to learn more.

Calendar

Aug. 11-13: Kidz In Motion conference, Orlando, FL.

SBS USA will present a workshop and exhibit.

* Pre-conferences, 8/10/11: "CPS on School Bus" training from *Safe Ride News* & Chicco "Safe Travel for All Children." To register for both the conference and a pre-conference, go to www.kidzinmotion.org.

Thanks to Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. (TMS), the SafetyBeltSafe Social was held on March 28 in Phoenix Convention Center, offering a relaxed chance to catch up with CPS advocates across the nation.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.
 Office: 1124 W. Carson St.
 LA BioMed,
 Building B-1 West
 Torrance, CA 90502
 (310)222-6860 - English
 (310)222-6862 - Spanish
 (800)745-SAFE
 (800)747-SANO
 FAX: (310)222-6862
 Web site: www.carseat.org
 Mail: Box 553
 Altadena, CA 91003
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
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SBS USA Presents...

Suitable for pediatricians and other health care professionals, SBS USA offers a basic overview of current CPS issues and answers, including the basics of special needs transport.

The SBS USA Model City/Boosters Are For Big Kids project, funded by CA OTS, makes CPSTs available to visit your organization to share our experiences with integrated efforts to teach the 5-Step Test in schools and community gatherings, while engaging teens and adults to include the 5-Step Test in their programs. Cut injuries for kids 45% by increasing booster use until belts fit. If parents and kids don't know what boosters do to position belts and how lack of fit hurts, they often abandon boosters too soon.

New Products

Cybox Aton is a rear-facing seat for 4-35 lbs. with 5-point harness, front adjuster strap, and adjustable base that includes belt tensioner for use with LATCH or vehicle belt.

Evenflo has two new rear-facing seats for 5-35 lbs., Embrace 35 and Secure Ride 35. Both have 5-point harness, front adjuster strap, and adjustable base (not required).

Secure Ride 35 has click-on, self-tightening LATCH straps and no-thread harness. **Learning Curve** Compass Pathway Booster B570, for 30-100 lbs., has a non-removable back with adjustable headrest. It can be folded for storage and has lower LATCH anchors. **Orbit Baby** has changed weight limits for Infant G2 (4-30 lbs.) and Toddler (20-65 lbs.).

Are you renewed for 2011?

Tidbits from Lifesavers

Phoenix hosted the March Lifesavers conference, which offered a wide variety of plenary sessions and workshops, fostering exposure to new areas.

Manufacturers added products that cover the tinier and largest child passengers with some rear-facing-only seats listing birth, instead of a lower weight, and top weights for boosters at 125 lbs. The concern about the very low default weight listed for tether use was immense; the brief roll-call training provided by SBS USA interested others wanting to engage more officers in enforcement protection for children.

A favorite new suggestion for the rear-facing message was 2(to) the Limit, i.e. use the seat rear facing to age 2 and to the limit on the seat, which could be 45 lbs.

Joe Colella of Traffic Safety Projects reported on his introduction of interactive education of elementary school students in auditoriums in New Jersey where the push for more booster use longer is underway. The Fit Test approach, like the 5-Step Test, is used to underscore the "Belts on Bones" message in the program.

Thank You. . .

(For 2011 membership year)

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- \$445** Kids Travelsafe of
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- \$400** Clarkstown Police Dept
- \$250** E-Z-On Products of FL
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Correct Use REALLY Matters: Safety Seat Checkup Week 2011

Anne Hamilton, SBS USA Board Member, and her family became the focus of Safety Seat Checkup Week because doing things right meant all of them attended Safety Seat Checkup Day in Los Angeles—instead of facing tragedy. Heading by night for Phoenix, Anne had a strategy: put her older two, ages 6 and 4, in forward-facing, tethered IMMI Toddler Safety Seats so napping would be less hazardous than in a booster and keep the youngest, almost 3, rear facing. She stowed their gear carefully and luckily, rode in back with the girls. Rounding a bend at highway speed, they hit debris, which sent the vehicle swerving and rolling over. Anne remembers the joy of each child's cries; her husband climbed out, and when the dust cleared, Anne and the older girls had some injuries, the worst a broken leg, but the youngest child had not even a bruise. Rear facing really is 5 times safer. And Anne was up to checking seats on April 16, too!

Anne became a CPS Technician (CPST), inspired by Marc Cohen, long time Board member, who came to her house to help her get her first daughter safely buckled up. Impressed by her preparation, Marc, CPST Instructor, suggested she become a CPST. But he didn't know her eldest was saved in a crash shortly after his visit nor that she had taken his advice to certify. With pleasure, Marc presented the family with "SafetyBeltSaved" buttons.

The report clearly impressed parents at the checkup. In 30 vehicles, 27 families with 40 seats from 23 different zip codes in Los Angeles County converged on the Petersen Automotive Museum parking lot where 31 checkers from Santa Barbara to Riverside Counties found 91 errors, including 2 seats requiring replacement and one with 7 errors, but also 6 correctly used seats. The kids were especially pleased to see Bucklebear smiling and waving, not knowing that inside, Jamie Oseas was celebrating her 14th birthday, as she remarked cheerfully "in a parking lot." Volunteers from Civil Air Patrol and Torrance Police Explorers managed traffic and greeted families. Thanks to all contributors, including sponsors California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and TMS USA. Other counties and cities joined Los Angeles County in declaring the Week; law enforcement agencies, including CA Highway Patrol and Los Angeles P.D., participated actively in Special Enforcement Week from April 3-9.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.
P.O. Box 553
Altadena, California 91003



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Proposed Fit Program from NHTSA---Updated

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) changed the date for submission of comments for NHTSA -2010-0062 just after *SBS News*, 3/11, went to press. However, comments, even now, may be considered. The proposal, as summarized previously, relates to a possible database at safercar.gov, noting safety seats which fit in specific vehicles based on auto manufacturer testing.

SBS USA first voiced concerns about the effect of the limited requirement of only 3 seats in 3 categories on smaller manufacturers and the proposal to let manufacturers test for fit without using tethers for seats certified above 40 lbs. Given longer to review, SBS USA raised even more concerns.

SBS USA proposed requiring "DO NOT USE ABOVE XX LBS." on LATCH attachments to combat parental misunderstanding about weight limitations if manufacturers continue to restrict use above 40-48 lbs. and likewise, to require very clear warnings about using LATCH with boosters if there is a chance of poor performance when lower anchors are used to prevent unoccupied boosters becoming missiles. NHTSA suggested that a gap behind the booster might qualify as non-fitting with LATCH in use because the child might slip into it in a crash. If this is a risk, all need to know about it NOW.

Just as University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) calls into question the idea in the proposal that any vehicle with a single location in which a safety seat can't fit should be omitted from the Web site listing, SBS USA is concerned that not being able to use rear-facing tethers Australian style or to fit the shoulder belt around the back of a rear-facing seat, an optional attachment method, will eliminate seats from the list

for some vehicles although the seat works fine using the more common rear-facing tether or belt routings.

The proposed regulation attracted input from *Safe Ride News*, SAFE KIDS, AAP, Advocates for Highway Safety, Consumers Union (CU), Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Nissan North America, Juvenile Products Manufacturers Assn (JPMA), GlobalAutomakers (GA), among others. Nissan, with its 10-year history of Snug Kids™, and CU provide instructive, practical input based on performing extensive vehicle-safety seat fit tests already. JPMA, the Alliance, and GA share insights from the manufacturers' perspective.

The range of comments is instructive and in fact, forms a multi-dimensional image of the tension between innovation and variability vs. consistency and conformity that has been present since the 1970s. In the early days, the crash-tested safety seats were sold by automakers and "looked weird" to parents who begged for an expanded selection. Today, there are hundreds of models with various approaches to meeting or exceeding FMVSS 213.

We recommend reading the submissions (www.regulations.gov) to stimulate national conversation about potential solutions for the consumer and most of all, for the children who are at risk. NHTSA will find a wealth of experience expressed in the comments. Alisa Baer, MD, who has assisted in more than 10,000 safety seat installations over 14 years, expressed the wish underlying all the detail in the proposal and the responses: every seat would fit in every vehicle without additional equipment nor yet another database!