

# SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 33, No. 1

January 2012



## New Project Begins

With a \$10,000 one-year grant, The Atlas Family Foundation is enabling *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A. to offer outreach to pediatricians in Los Angeles County to attend one-hour briefings on the newest recommendations in child passenger safety (CPS) and to receive a starter-pack of brochures to use in their practices. We look forward to partnering with hospitals and pediatric associations to find and engage the physicians.

We invite readers to get in touch with suggestions for general meetings where we might share information or names of key practitioners to reach. Enlisting the pediatric community to encourage rear facing travel longer, tether use, and teaching the 5-Step Test for belt fit is especially timely, given the revised California law which can be an entrée for discussing these vital facets of injury prevention.

## Indiana University Medical School Research

J O'Neil et al presented comparative data from Indiana on observed CPS usage, which can be used for comparisons in other states. The report in *Annals of Advances in Automotive Medicine*, 2011, "Important Child Occupant Safety Trends, Indiana, '05-'10," showed improved adoption of recommended usage. Over a five-year period, samples of families at observation points were both observed by CPS Technicians and given short demographic queries. Results showed that by 2010, 89% of children under age 1 were riding rear facing, a gain of 14%, and 58% of forward-facing seats had top tether straps attached. For back seat travel, the rate was almost 89% for those under age 13.

A second set of findings, reported in *Clinical Pediatrics*, 2011, by O'Neil et al, "Drivers' Reasons for Choosing Forward-Facing Car Safety Seats," was based on a subset of drivers from the convenience sample collected in 2009, mentioned above. Drivers were asked which was the safest direction for children to face while traveling; 94% of 716 drivers answered "to the rear" for children under 1 but only a quarter said the same for children 1 to 2 years old.

Next, drivers with children under age 2 were observed. Of children under 1, 84% were rear facing in contrast to only 13% of children of 12-23 months. When 71 drivers with children forward facing under 23 months were asked why, the most common answers, is 1 year, outgrew safety seat, and was too heavy, contrasted with the children's weight. Only one was 40 lbs., while the rest weighed under 35 lbs. (Not quite as frequent, at 47%, was the "feet touching the vehicle seat" response.) Asked the source of their information, 71% cited the safety seat manual, family (51%), doctor (39%), and friends (37%). Of the 8 drivers with rear-facing children in tow who had completed responses, all stated greater safety as the reason and were influenced by a doctor or nurse, the safety seat manual or a CPS Technician.

The researchers noted the reliance of both groups on the manual, suggesting that more clarity about rear-facing as safer might be effective, as would public information campaigns about the greater safety of rear-facing travel for children under age 2.

**New Contact Info:** Shelness Productions, creator of the 20-minute DVD, "Don't Risk Your Child's Life," available in English or Spanish, is an excellent resource for presenting the major concepts in CPS to parents and professionals. To find out more: 1520 Martin Street, Suite 209, Winston Salem, NC 27103. Phone: 336/725-7271. E-mail: shelprod@gmail.com.

**Britax Recall**

**Calendar:**

**Thank You . . .**

Britax has announced a recall for Chaperone rear-facing-only seats (model #E9L692J, E9L692K, E9L692L, or E9L692M) made 9/1/10 to 4/30/11. The harness adjuster may detach from the shell due to an improperly installed rivet. If the adjuster is detached, do not use the seat until it is repaired. Call 888/427-4829 for the repair kit.

*“In a pinch, can I have two children share a safety belt?”  
 “What’s the best way to buckle up if I’m pregnant?”  
 Find the answers to these and other safety-related questions at [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org).*

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](http://www.carseat.org)  
 Mail: Box 553  
 Altadena, CA 91003  
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**Safety Seat Checkups**

10 am - 2 pm for public; 9 am-3 pm for checkers. To reserve checkup or volunteer, call 310/222-6860.

*Sponsors: CA Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)/Pomona Police Dept/Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.:*

\* **4/21:** Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

*Sponsors: CA OTS & Pomona P.D.:*  
 \* **5/22:** Pomona, CA

*Sponsored by Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A.:*

\* **5/5:** Columbus, IN.

10 am - 2 pm. To volunteer or reserve a spot, call 800/745-SAFE. Leave a number for a call back.

**Educator Workshop**

3 CEUs for CPST/CPSTI;  
 6 CEUs for nurses.

*Sponsors: CA OTS/Pomona P.D.*

\* **4/5:** Altadena, CA

8:15 am-4:30 pm

**CONFERENCES**

\* **6/14-16:** Lifesavers 2012, Orlando, FL. Go to:

[www.lifesaversconference.org](http://www.lifesaversconference.org).

\* **8/16-18:** Kidz in Motion, Orlando, FL. Go to: [www.kidzinmotion.org](http://www.kidzinmotion.org).

**\$10,000** The Atlas Family Foundation

**\$7515** Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.

**\$6000** American Honda Motors

**\$2500** Emily Alexander

**\$2070** State of Oregon Membership

**\$1700** Hinricher & Crasnick LLP / Lori Jacobs

**\$500** AAA Northern California, Nevada, and Utah

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HHSA—Shasta County Public

Health Department

Gisela Moriarty

New Economics for Women

Rady Children’s Hospital

St Vincent Infirmary

Becky Thams

The Automotive Safety Program,

Riley Children’s Hospital

**Protecting Kids in the Car**

Reported in Traffic Injury Prevention, Norwegian investigators made in-depth investigations of serious crashes with children riding in the vehicles. The research included thorough assessment of the entire vehicle environment as well as types and use of restraints. Children were examined either post-mortem or clinically.

M. Skjerven-Martinsen and his team found two major sources of the eight seriously and seven fatally injured among the 27 children in 15 serious crashes. Primary errors occurred from incorrectly routed or poorly adjusted harnesses or safety belts; however, four of 15 were hurt by unstrapped luggage loose in the vehicle. The children who died succumbed at the crash scene, including six with head or upper neck trauma. None of the children died due to the rapid change of velocity in the crashes. Of those with little or no injury, the key was correct use.

The finding underscores the need to not only observe how safety seats and belts are used but to direct attention to unsecured items that might crush or strike even correctly restrained children.

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

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\* E-mail address is required to receive passwords for access to Recall List and CPS Tech Update.

All memberships/subscriptions include *SafetyBeltSafe News*, which qualifies for 1 Continuing Education Unit per year for re-certifying Technicians and Instructors with subscriber code. \$200 or more includes *Safe Ride News*.

\_\_ Check here if you are a Certified Technician or Instructor and want information about CEUs for subscribers.

**Check below** if you want to receive the following special subscriptions:

\$50 minimum: \_\_ Recall Update Service by e-mail \_\_ Recall Update Service by regular mail (if necessary)

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*For \$100 members: Add \$35 and receive Safe Ride News thru 2012 & current DVD of safety seat manufacturers' instructions!*

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## ***New Products***

**Dorel** is phasing in changes for all of their convertible seats, which have a dual-level recline indicator for newborns to lean back about 45 degrees, older babies (22 lbs. and able to sit unassisted), to sit more upright (30 degrees), and are certified for 5-40 lbs. rear facing with a 5-point harness and front adjuster strap. Four cover 22-65 lbs. forward facing: **Aquos 65** has a no-thread harness and 3-position recline base; **Easy Fit 65** has 4 sets of harness slots; **Guide 65** and **XRS 65** are twin models with anti-rebound bolsters and 4 sets of harness slots. **Apt 40 RF**, a convertible for 22-40 lbs. forward facing, has 5 sets of harness slots and is described as a new, improved Scenera. **Alpha Elite 65**, with a no-thread harness and 3-position recline base, also has a booster mode for 40-100 lbs.

**Evenflo SecureKid**, (*see 11/11 issue*), is listed as **300** and **400**, differing mainly in that **400** has SureLATCH or automatic retractor technology.

**Graco Classic Ride 50**, 4-40 lbs. rear facing, 20-50 lbs. forward facing, has a 5-point harness with front adjuster strap, 3 sets of harness slots, and is a candidate for safety seat programs.

**Peg Perego Primo Viaggio SIP 5-70 Convertible**, with push-on LATCH connectors, covers 5-45 lbs. rear facing, 22-70 lbs. forward facing. The 5-point harness has a front adjuster strap; harness height is adjusted by pulling on a strap at the top of the headrest. The infant insert is used up to 22 lbs., rear facing only. The seat has belt clamps on both sides for both rear- and forward-facing use. These are not lockoffs and do not replace a locking retractor or locking clip. However, if the lap-shoulder belt has a switchable retractor, the clamps should prevent the seat from tilting as the shoulder belt tightens. Lower LATCH straps can only be used for children up to 30 lbs. unless the vehicle manufacturer states otherwise.

Sold online, **GoBooster**, for 40-80 lb. children, is an inflatable booster with shoulder and lap belt guides. It was originally called Easycarseat, but the company, now called GoBooster in the U.S., states few were sold here and all were returned. The design was modified to improve belt positioning. Its backrest provides shoulder belt guides but not necessarily head support, since it is relatively low. Company spokespersons suggested its purpose was for travel or "extra kid" use.

*SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A.  
P.O. Box 553  
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*Renew for 2012!*

*SafetyBeltSafe* News

January 2012

## **Belts and Boosters Studies**

Two studies to analyze kinematics and behavior of children riding in boosters or belts only were published in Annals of Advances in Automotive Medicine (AAAM) in 2011 by teams headed by K Bohman and J L Forman, respectively. "Kinematics & Shoulder Belt Position of Child Rear Seat Passengers During Vehicle Maneuvers" reports studies of the lateral movement of belts during a series of controlled turns to simulate pre-crash swerves. Researchers found the shoulder belt slipped off the shoulder of smaller children in backless boosters. Although the findings were not interpreted as negative for boosters, it might encourage parents to use high-weight harness safety seats longer, rather than moving quickly to boosters usually needed until ages 10-12.

The second study, "Child Posture & Shoulder Belt Fit during Extended Night-Time Traveling," (*10/11 issue*), used video camera technology to record children's positions for 30 children, ages 7 to 14, using the appropriately fitted boosters with or without backs or belts only. Boosters with backs positively impacted good belt fit and reduced lateral head movement, voluntary or due to sleep. In the future, the team expects to examine lap belt fit and finally, predicted injury risk. Once again, the concept of "graduation" in CPS is shown to be "demotion," a concept which would help both parents and children to resist moving prematurely from each type of safety restraint to one with less protection. Between belts only and boosters, injury reduction was 45% in an earlier Children's Hospital of Philadelphia study.

## ***Little "Houdinis"***

A recent tragic pedestrian death of a child with emotional challenges puts in high relief the issue of "escaping" children. According to one report, the child opened the door prematurely and fell into traffic where a motorist struck and killed him. In another case, a younger child emerged from her seat; her parent asked an older child to get and re-buckle her but in the course of "supervising" the situation, the driver lost control, and the younger child died. The child's grandparent has started a campaign, "Pull Over," to remind parents to stop before trying to deal with such situations.

Questions regarding this situation arise routinely on the SBS USA Helpline, with two categories especially frequent. First are the under-3-year olds who figure out how to release either the retainer clip or the buckle or whose straps are not snug enough so they can get one shoulder out at a time. Often the pattern is repetitive, frightening parents badly. The other major group are children and young adults who cannot be persuaded to stay in belts or harnesses reliably, due to emotional issues or the inability to understand the risks. Sometimes such situations result in very dangerous outcomes, including crashes, because the passenger may interfere with the driver during transit.

SBS USA has a flyer that suggests ways to reinforce improved behavior and extinguish the negative behavior. However, for both groups, there is a need for immediate relief. For some, simply making sure that the harness is snug works; for others, finding a seat with a retainer clip design that is more difficult to open does the trick. However, a rear-closing E-Z-On Vest may be essential for some children. In addition, for the most difficult situations, a particular method of tethering the vest to the floor behind the child's seat may be required. Thanks to Donna Laake of Ohio for this suggestion as well as noting that for some youngsters diagnosed with autism spectrum, Velcro on the outside of the buckle button discourages touching it.