

# SafetyBeltSafe News

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## ■ From Lifesavers '14

**Feedback on Checkups:** An important report focused on the future impact on behavior of the safety seat checkup from SBS USA member Cook Children's Medical Center, TX. Dana Walraven voiced it as "how much do they remember" 3 months later? Over an 11-month period, 300 participants were queried to find out. The vast majority had safety seats with harnesses; 8% had boosters. Installation issues, such as the harness pinch test, the 1"-or-less seat movement, retainer clip at armpit level, use of shoulder-lap belt with booster in proper locations, and determining next steps in buckling up were recalled by 84%-100% of respondents. Even the least remembered item, expiration dates, was at the 75% level. When it came to attitude toward the service, all evaluations were above 91% positive; moreover, nearly 3% of the children had been in a crash since their checkup, none of whom was injured.

**Do Rear Seats and Safety Seats Accommodate Kids Well?:** Kathy Klinich, PhD, University of MI Transportation Research Institute, focused on measuring "real kids" to answer questions about positioning in safety seats and vehicle back seats. A paper developed in '11 had indicated that for 8 and 10 year old dummies, a shorter vehicle seat cushion and belt anchors in a more forward position had the best chance of fitting kids. (Studies have shown 84% of children do not fit well in vehicle back seats without boosters.) But child passenger safety (CPS) guidelines suggest 80% support of safety seats, and some seat manufacturers require full support by the vehicle seat. Also belts forward of the seat bight led to the lower-anchor federal regulation in '02 because of extensive incompatibility of fit.

The study went further, installing seats with lower anchors and testing both rear-facing and forward-facing seats to FMVSS 213 specifications. All passed 213 requirements, even when less than 80% of the safety seat was supported. Only 1 seat fell off forward facing; it still passed. All rear-facing seats rotated no more than 70%, passing as well.

Klinich also measured, observed, and filmed 29 18-36 month olds in safety seats to capture their extremity postures and frequency of changes. Records showed 50-125 changes per hour! Overall, the seat width influenced posture rear facing; depth, forward facing.

## ■ Thank You to:

\$200 University City Fire Dept.

## ■ RECALLS

- ✓ **Aprica** A30, made 7/1/11-4/30/12, has a hard-to-release harness buckle. See Graco note for action needed.
- ✓ **Baby Trend** Trendz Fastback 3-in-1 (FB60070 and 60408) manufactured 10/1/11-7/31/13) has a hard-to-release harness buckle, risking the child in an emergency; replace it by calling 800/328-7363.
- ✓ **Graco** rear-facing-only seats have been added to the sticky-buckle recall; replace buckles on SnugRide/SnugRide Classic Connect (3/1/11-5/31/13); SnugRide 30/Classic Connect 30 (7/1/10-1/31/13); SnugRide 35/Classic Connect 35 (5/1/11-1/31/13); SnugRide Click Connect 40 (6/1/12-12/31/12) through either 877/766-7460 or GracoBuckleRecall.com.
- ✓ The **Recaro** ProSport combination seat, 6/16/10-1/31/13, exhibited excessive head excursion if installed with lower anchors ONLY. Call 888/973-2276 for new instructions and labels to discontinue use of lower anchors at 40 lbs., not 52 lbs., as originally indicated if the top tether were used as expected.

## ■ New Safety Seats:

✓ **Aria Child, Inc.** introduced Urbini Petal Touri and Urbini Petal Omni, two versions of a rear-facing-only seat for 4-35 lb. babies to match two different stroller systems. The seat has a premie insert that must be used if child is under 6 lbs., four sets of harness slots, two sets of loops on the harness ends, and two sets of slots at each hip. The base has a lock-off and an angle indicator based on child's weight. A pool noodle or towel may be used even when the adjustment foot on the base is in use. Any of four locked handle positions may be used for travel. When installed without the base, the shoulder portion of the belt is routed through a guide on the back of the seat.

✓ **Britax** introduced the ClickTight series of convertibles. The Advocate, Boulevard, and Marathon hold kids 5-40 lbs. rear-facing (RF) and 20-65 lbs. forward-facing (FF). ClickTight is a system in which the seat pan is raised to thread the safety belt and then closed to maintain a tight installation, avoiding use of lock-offs or locking clips. Among the common features of the seats are ten-year expiration, 7 recline positions, RF and FF recline indicators, and 2-position crotch straps. All feature a no-rethread harness; the Boulevard and Advocate have the Click Safe harness indicator and 14-position headrests, while the Marathon has a 12-position headrest only.

Discontinue lower anchor use at 35 lbs. RF, 40 lbs. FF for the Boulevard and Marathon, at 30 lbs. and 35 lbs. respectively for the Advocate. Earlier additions to the Britax collection are convertibles Highway (5-40 lbs., RF, 20-65 lbs. FF) and Roundabout (same RF, to 55 lbs. FF), both of which have 4 sets of harness slots, dual position crotch strap, 3 recline positions, lock-offs, RF and FF tethering, and an infant pillow used to 22 lbs. If used with Ford inflatable safety belts, do NOT use the lock-off.

✓ The **Clek Fllo** convertible seat fits kids who sit unassisted and weigh 14-50 lbs. RF and 22-65 lbs. FF. Use of the anti-rebound bar is optional. It has an angle adjustment foot built into the CR, a 9-year expiration date, dual loops on the harness strap ends, and lock-offs. There are 4 sets of harness slots for harness fit. Discontinue lower anchor use in RF mode at 35 lbs.; 40 lbs. in FF mode. Using inflatable safety belts is not permitted.

✓ **Graco** introduced the Argos 80 Elite, a combination seat that covers 20-80 lbs. in harness mode, 30-100 lbs. in highback booster mode, and 40-120 lbs. (and at least 4 years old) in backless booster mode. The seat has a 10-year life, a no-rethread harness, a 5-position headrest, 3 recline positions, a lock-off, and harness pads that must be used. Discontinue use of lower anchors at 45 lbs., unless vehicle manufacturer states a lower weight.

Also new is the Milestone, a 3-in-1 seat for 5-40 lbs. in RF, 20-65 lbs. FF, and 30-100 lbs. (and at least age 3) in booster mode. It has a no-rethread harness with a 10-position headrest. Discontinue use of lower anchors when child reaches 42 lbs.

The Argos 65, a combination seat, accommodates kids 20-65 lbs. in harness mode, 30-120 lbs. in highback booster mode, and 40-100 lbs. in backless booster mode. It has a 5-position, no-rethread harness, a 2-position crotch strap, a 3-position recline adjustment, and 10-year life. Remove body support when child is over 35 lbs.

Also available is the Fit 4 Me 65/Head Wise 65/My Size 65/Size 4 Me 65. This convertible accepts kids 4-40 lbs. RF and 20-65 FF. There are 2 sets of LATCH straps, a 3-position recline, 8-position headrest with no-rethread harness, and a 2-position crotch strap.

The 4Ever is a convertible/combination seat that protects kids 4-40 lbs. RF, 20-65 lbs. FF, 30-100 lbs. with the backrest in booster mode, and 40-120 lbs. in backless mode. Features include a 10-position headrest, 6 recline positions, and a 10-year expiration. For all of these seats, stop use of lower anchors at 42 lbs., unless vehicle manufacturer states a lower-weight limit.

✓ The **Recaro** Performance Coupe is a rear-facing-only seat with a 6-year life for kids 4-35 lbs. It has a 5-position no-rethread harness, push-on lower connectors, the Safety Stripe system to reveal twists in the harness, and an infant insert for use from 4-12 lbs.

Only the anti-rebound position of 4 handle locations is for vehicle travel. The base offers 3 approaches to correct recline angle: a foot that flips down or a micro adjuster, a knob that makes small angle changes, or both.

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**■ From Kidz in Motion 2014**

Held in NM, Kidz in Motion, 2014, the 10<sup>th</sup> CPS conference, honored the seven who had attended all 10 conferences: Barbara Birkenshaw, VW; Emilie Crown, Montgomery Co Fire; Carol Helminski, Graco; Patsy Pilcher, Evenflo; Allana Pinkerton, Diono; Julie Prom, formerly Chicco; and Stephanie Tombrello, SBS USA. Each exhibitor presented brief highlights---including 16 safety seat companies. A new exhibitor, MiiG Enterprises, introduced the buckle**opper**, a mom-designed tool for those with hand-pain issues to release safety seat buckles with ease. It also helps open safety belt buckles, enabling independent travel.

In addition, My Cue, the streamer which attaches to safety seats to remind that baby is on board; Huggable Images, the teaching dolls; and materials developers Child Safety Solutions; Safe Ride News; and SBS USA were joined by VW of America, whose presentation focused on traffic safety news, including the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking of FMVSS 150 for V2V\* communication to mitigate intersection crashes; the Smart Mirror, which gives a wider field of vision, not showing head restraints and other obstructions; the Smart Seat Adjustment APP—insert one's size and it adjusts personal and rental cars for the user. Perhaps most unnerving was the self-parking Audi which dropped off the driver at the entrance to the parking garage, found a spot, shut down, and then could be called to pick up the driver at the garage entrance when it was time to go.

**Buckle-Up Incompatibilities**

Three workshops analyzed aspects of safety seats, such as why there is no global safety seat, how to make the shell of a safety seat, and why soft goods in seats matter. Another presentation, which quantified the fit of seats in vehicles to provide a benchmark of data for seat and vehicle manufacturers, included 59 safety seats and 61 vehicles with 40 data points per safety seat and 94 per vehicle: 3600 combinations!

\*Vehicle-to-vehicle  
*(Continued on pg 4)*

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## SafetyBeltSafe News

September 2014

### ■ **KIM**, continued from pg 3

Six aspects of fit were presented by Julie Bing, Ohio State University, study collaborator with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

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Width along the seat bight line may mean that a narrower safety seat fits "better" but is a wider base safer? Results for both seats rear facing (RF) and forward facing (FF) were similar: approximately. 63% fit, not resting on seat "bolsters" around the seat rims. RF-only seats were more than 90% good fits vs. 3-in-one seats at less than 40%.

Other fit issues: almost 99% vehicles supported 80% of the base of safety seats but only 71% provided 100% support. Especially with more vehicle manuals instructing users to avoid pressure on the back of front passenger seats, clearance for RF seats is an issue. Only 15.3% of RF seats fit when the front seat was fully back, improving to 73.2% when partway, and 95.8%, when fully forward.

A formerly common issue, the belt buckle resting on the plastic edge of the rear-facing safety seat belt path, appears to be mitigated with 90.5% successfully fitted. Only small/standard trucks were under 80% successful fits.

Obtaining the correct rear-facing angle was difficult as manufacturers need to pass FMVSS 213 on a flat "seat" reflecting a 1972 Chevy. In "real life," 7 seats couldn't be properly fitted in any vehicle as the seat pan angle needed to be less than 7.1 degrees which was the minimum found (maximum was 22 degrees with an average of 13.4 degrees). Success at 58.2% left 37.6% too upright, risking airway closure, and 4.2%, too flat, placing extra pressure on the shoulders and skull of a newborn in a crash.

An especially frustrating problem is presented by non-removable vehicle head restraints for FF seat installation, achieving fit only 66.4% of the time. These data offer areas of focus for parents selecting seats. The team will do sled tests to compare effects of narrow vs. wider bases and to see if pool noodles and the 80% base support are effective under crash conditions.

Autobytel has chosen to support National Child Passenger Safety Week by working with SBS USA to create 13 short videos to explain CPS. John Stubbs, CPSTI, portrayed a series of installations; Stephanie Tombrello describes the types of seats and equipment for attachment of seats. Autobytel staff delve into auto family-friendly features of many vehicles.

To view, visit <http://www.autobytel.com/car-ownership/family>.