



JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

dedicated to the prevention of disease and promotion of wellness for our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SAFE KIDS JOHNSON COUNTY OFFERS CAR SEAT INSPECTIONS ON NATIONAL SEAT CHECK SATURDAY

Event Kicks-Off Child Passenger Safety Week

(OLATHE, KS – DATE) **September 09, 2009** – Safe Kids Johnson County urges parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seats are properly installed in their vehicles at the third annual “National Seat Check Saturday,” on Saturday September 12. Safe Kids Johnson County will have certified child passenger safety technicians available to provide hands-on instruction on installing car seats and booster seats at McCarthy Chevrolet Dealership located at 675 N. Rawhide in Olathe, Kansas from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

“It’s the responsibility of every parent and caregiver to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time and at every age,” said Katie Schatte, Safe Kids Johnson County Coordinator. “We are urging everyone to have their child checked to be sure they are using the right restraint—a car seat, booster seat or seat belt. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes.”

According to a 2008 study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the use of child restraints declines as children get older. From birth to 12 months, 99 percent of children ride in a restraint. It drops to 92 percent for kids ages 1 to 3. For kids ages 4 to 7, 89 percent are restrained. But only 85 percent of kids ages 8 to 12 ride in a restraint.

“Parents need to set the rules and stay vigilant,” said Schatte. “Booster seats and seat belts are just as important for older kids as car seats are for younger kids.”

Safe Kids coalitions around the country are joining NHTSA in National Seat Check Saturday activities to kick off Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs from September 12 through 18. Safe Kids Buckle Up, the child passenger safety program of Safe Kids USA in partnership with General Motors, holds child safety seat checkups and other vehicle safety events throughout the year. Nationwide, the Safe Kids Buckle Up program has reached more than 20 million people and has inspected more than 1.1 million car seats.

According to Katie Schatte, Safe Kids Johnson County Coordinator, parents and caregivers should follow a few basic guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect their children in a vehicle:

1. For the best possible protection keep infants in a back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible—up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. Never turn a child forward-facing before age 1 and at least 20 pounds, although keeping kids rear-facing until age 2 is safer and preferred if the seat allows.

2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats, they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in a back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular harnessed seat. Many newer seats exceed the old 40 pound weight limit.
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats, they should ride on booster seats, in a back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly.
4. Seat belts fit properly when the child can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test: the lap belt lays across the upper thighs, the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collar bone and the knees bend naturally at the seat's edge (usually when the child is between 8 and 12 years old, approximately 4'9" tall and 80 to 100 pounds).
5. After children fully outgrow their booster seats, they should use the adult seat belts in a back seat. The lap belt should lay across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits rests on the shoulder or collar bone.

Safe Kids Johnson County works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability for children ages 1 to 14. Safe Kids Johnson County is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Johnson County was founded in 1989 and is led by the Johnson County Health Department.

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