

**FINAL (3/19-20/2007)**

### Questions & Sample Answers / ECHO-TV Show # 305-306 “Child Safety Seats”

(Recording Show: Tuesday, March 27th, 2007 / 3:00-8:00 pm @ TPT)

#### 1. Why is this show important to talk about in our community?

Sample Answer:

- We know parents love their children and want to do the right thing for them and some family don't know about car seats or safe ways to travel with children.
- Motor vehicle crashes still remain the number one cause of death for children under the age of 14 in America.
- A car seat will hold a child safely in place and help protect the head and spinal cord increasing the chances of avoiding death or serious injury by up to 70 percent.
- Seat belts are designed for adults. Children are too small for the seat belts to fit and hold them properly.
- Picking a car seat can be confusing but parents can find help and learn how to fit the child and the car with the right car seat for best protection.

#### 2. Do people *have* to use a car seat for their children?

Sample Answer:

- YES! Every state has laws requiring that young children be buckled in car seats that meet government safety standards.
- In Minnesota, children under age four must ride buckled into car seats.

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- Police officers can stop drivers if children are not in car seats and can write a ticket with a fine that can cost \$100 or more.
  
- Car seat laws change so to find out more information visit this web site: “Car – Seats – Made – Simple – Dot – Org” ([www.carseatsmadesimple.org](http://www.carseatsmadesimple.org)) or talk to local police.

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**3. Why can't children just use regular seat belts?**

Sample Answer:

- Seat belts are made to fit adults, not small children.
- The shoulder belt rides up on a child's neck and face instead of crossing snugly over the shoulder and collarbone.
- Children often put the shoulder belt under their arm or behind their back to keep it from rubbing their face or neck. But when a shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back, a child could suffer severe injuries during a crash.
- Many people know the law requires infants and small children to be in car seats but many people don't know that children who weigh about 40 to 80 pounds need to be buckled in booster seats so the car's shoulder and lap belts fit right.

**4. It seems like it would be just as safe if adults held babies in their laps while traveling in a vehicle. Is that okay?**

Sample Answer:

- No. It is against the law to hold a baby while riding in a car.

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- People may think they’re strong enough to hold on to their babies in a crash, but even at slow speeds, the baby will be thrown from their parents’ arms.
- Adults who are not buckled into a seat belt at the time of a crash will strike the steering wheel, windshield, dashboard or the inside frame of the car which can cause injury or death.

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#### 5. How can parents decide on the best car seat for their child?

Sample Answer:

- The best seat is one that fits a child's age and size, fits the car, and is used correctly each time people drive.
- Parents must choose the right seat depending how old their child is and how much the child weighs.
- Parents must also be sure the car seat will fit properly in the back seat of their vehicle.
- To find out more about choosing the right seat you can:
  - Read translated materials: “Car – Seats – Made – Simple – Dot – Org” ([www.carseatsmadesimple.org](http://www.carseatsmadesimple.org))
  - Contact your local public health or police department
  - Contact your doctor or clinic

#### 6. Is it safe to use a second-hand or used car seat?

Sample Answer:

- It's best to use a new car seat because it's the only way to be sure it is safe.
- If someone gives you or you buy a second-hand car seat:

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- Don't buy a car seat if was ever involved in a crash as it may have been damaged in ways that are not always visible.
- Car seats older than six years are no longer safe to use.
- Be sure the car seat has all its parts.
- Call to check if the car seat has been recalled by the manufacturer by dialing the toll free number found on the car seat label.

#### 7. What if someone has more children than can be buckled safely in the back seat?

Sample Answer:

- All passengers should buckle up with seat belts, car seats or booster seats when traveling.
- If you have more people than there are seat belts making a trip consider:
  - Planning ahead to make more than one trip or arranging for two vehicles
  - Car pooling with others so everyone is buckled up
  - Consider a larger vehicle to accommodate safety in growing families
- Children are safest in the back seat of a car (or the middle seat of a van or SUV), so it's best to keep them out of the front seat, especially if a car has passenger side air bags.
- If a child must ride in front, putting the child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness may be the safest choice.

#### 8. What if a car only has lap belts in the back seat?

Sample Answer:

- Having only lap belts in the back seat will work when buckling in infant and forward-facing car safety seats for young children but **WILL NOT** work with booster seats.

(ECHO TV #305-306 “Child Safety Seats” – Sponsored by: Triple AAA – Minnesota / Iowa, Safe Kids Worldwide, Minnesota Dept. of Health, Minnesota Safety Council, Minneapolis Auto Club Foundation for Safety, Johnson & Johnson and Safe Kids Minnesota. March 2007 by ECHO (Emergency and Community Health Outreach))

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- Older children riding in a booster seat with only a lap belt or riding with lap belts only could suffer major injuries in the event of a crash.
- For older children, if a car only has lap belts, parents should use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness and higher weight limits.
- Remember: **never** place a rear-facing infant seat in the front seat of a car with air bags.
- Check with a car dealer or the manufacturer of your car to see if shoulder belts can be installed.

#### **9. What should parents do if someone else will be driving their children?**

Sample Answer:

- Find out if the other person has car seats. Parents can loan their own car seats and help the other person install the seat.
- Be sure that they buckle up children in the back seat of the car (or middle seat of a van or SUV) whenever possible.
- Children under age 13 should always sit buckled in the back.

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**10. Is there anything else our expert guest might like to add?**

(Optional question only if time permits)

Sample Answer:

- When driving in a car, all passengers should buckle up to help improve safety on the road.
- Traffic crashes are the greatest risk that children face. Parents can protect children by taking simple steps to choose the right car seat and install it properly.