

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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**Confused about new car seat recommendations?
Two opportunities to get help coming up in April**

What: Safety Seat Checkup

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Where: Walmart store parking lot,
80 Rio Rancho Road, Pomona, CA 91766

Where: Petersen Automotive Museum,
6060 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

When: Thursday April 7, 10 am to 2 pm

When: Thursday April 16, 10 am to 2 pm

Media opportunities: interviews with safety experts, photo opportunities (children, car seats, community and law enforcement volunteers)

TORRANCE, CA (March 30, 2011) -- New guidelines on how children should travel in the car, released by the American Academy of Pediatrics and endorsed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration last week, have got parents talking. But many are confused about how best to follow the pediatricians' new advice.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A., in partnership with local police departments, is offering parents the opportunity to receive hands-on assistance with their safety seats and boosters at two Safety Seat Checkups in April.

The checkups will take place on Thursday, April 7, 10 am to 2 pm, at the Walmart store parking lot, 80 Rio Rancho Road, Pomona, CA 91766 and on Saturday, April 16, 10 am to 2 pm at the Petersen Automotive Museum, 6060 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036. Parents and caregivers are advised to make a checkup appointment in advance by calling the Safe Ride Helpline (310-222-6860).

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The new AAP policy recommends that children ride facing the rear of the car until they are AT LEAST two years old and then ride forward facing in a seat with a full harness as long as possible (up to the maximum weight and height specified by the manufacturer). The organization recommends that children use a booster seat until the safety belt fits properly, usually between 8 and 12 years old.

Parents with children of all ages are encouraged to attend one of the checkups so a team of nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians can check that their seats are installed correctly and not on recall. More than 90% of the safety seats inspected at recent checkups had one error or more.

“We’re very pleased to see the new AAP recommendations, which move toward the position that SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. has held for some years now,” said Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Many parents don’t realize that children between one and two years old are five times safer if their safety seats are installed facing the back of the car.”

“Parents often have concerns about how toddlers will fit in rear-facing seats and if they will be comfortable,” Tombrello said. “They also worry about how to get older children to comply with using boosters. We can help parents with both the behavioral and the safety concerns.”

Tombrello emphasized the importance of the new guidelines. It is estimated that an estimated 1000 toddlers have been unnecessarily injured in the past 15 years because they were riding in forward-facing seats. These injuries can include paralysis and permanent disability. Using a booster seat until the belt fits cuts injury risk by half.

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SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. has tested belt fit with the “5-Step Test” for more than 2500 children from Los Angeles County and discovered that the vast majority did not fit properly in a safety belt until age 10–12.

The checkups are made possible with funding from a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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