



## 2012 Child Passenger Safety Week

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### Safe Kids Snohomish County Urges Caregivers to Get Their Child Safety Seats Inspected on Friday, September 21

**Snohomish County – Safe Kids Snohomish County** is urging parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seats are properly installed during **Child Passenger Safety Week September 16-22<sup>nd</sup>**. As part of Child Passenger Safety Week Snohomish County will have certified technicians available to provide free hands-on child safety seat inspections and advice from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Babies R Us, 19500 Alderwood Mall Parkway, Lynnwood, WA. Seat checks are available by appointment at 425-672-3220. Space is limited so call today!

"It's the responsibility of every single caregiver out there to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time," said **Shawneri Guzman, Safe Kids Coordinator**. "We are urging everyone to learn more about their child safety seats. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes."

Motor vehicle crashes ranked as one of the top three injury areas in Snohomish County. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports an estimated 8 out of 10 car seats are installed improperly. **That means over 85% of our children are not being protected in a crash.**

**The best way to protect your child is to put them in the right seat, at the right time and to use it the right way and to always practice safe driving habits.** Always follow the child safety seats manufacturer's recommendations regarding height and weight limits and how to properly install the seat in your vehicle. The car seat manufacturer may also have installation videos on their website. In addition, consult your vehicle owner's manual to learn how your seat belt system works as well as locating LATCH and Tether anchors. All are great resources to ensure you are providing the best protection possible for your child.

1. For optimal protection, keep infants in the back seat, rear-facing, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of your seat. In many cases the child will be over the age of 2 when they reach that milestone. Rear-facing is 5 times safer than forward facing protecting the child's head, neck and spine in a crash. Never place a child rear-facing in the front seat with an active airbag.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seat (typically around age 2) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat. Opt for seats with higher height and weight limits to allow the child to stay in the harness system for as long as possible. Never move a child to a booster seat too soon.
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat (maximizing the height and weight limits of the seat), they should ride in a booster seat, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belt fit properly. Booster seats "boost" the child's body up so the seat belt fits correctly and works how it's supposed to in a crash-- rather than injure them. Booster seats require a lap and shoulder belt and cannot be used with lap-only belts.
4. When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually when they are around 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belt, in the back seat, but only if it fits properly. The child should sit all the way back in the seat with their knees bending comfortably at the edge of the seat. The lap belt should lie on the top part of the thigh (not across the stomach) and the shoulder belt is centered at the chest and shoulder (not riding up on the neck). Never allow the child to place the shoulder belt under their arm or behind their back. Avoid lap-only belts if possible.

- Children are 40% safer riding in the back seat. It's not the size of the body; it's the age and maturity of the internal organs and skeletal system. A child may look like an adult on the outside but it's the insides that count in a crash. **According to Washington State law children younger than 13 shall ride in the back seat.** Exemptions include pickup trucks (with no back seats), sports cars, or if all seating positions are taken by other child passengers. It's safer and it's the law!

**In addition to the recommendations above, Safe Kids and its partners would also like to remind you to practice safe driving.**

- Distracted driving poses a serious risk on the roadway. According to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, a distracted driver is one who is paying attention to something other than driving. That can be anything from typing a text message to putting a disk in a CD player to talking on the cell phone.
- Speed Kills! Our partners at the Snohomish County Sheriff's office would like to remind you to obey all speed limit signs, especially in school zones and to watch out for pedestrians.
- Buzzed driving is drunk driving. Impaired driving is the leading cause of traffic related deaths in Washington. Impaired driving is defined as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol above .08 percent.

"Child passenger safety can be confusing" said Kristen Thorstenson, Snohomish County Child Passenger Safety Technician and Instructor. "From choosing the right seat, to installation and to understanding occupant protection laws not only will your child ride as safely as possible, you will be establishing the foundation for a lifelong habit of seat belt use every time your child travels."

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Safe Kids Snohomish County works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children ages 1 to 14. Its members include local fire and EMS, Police, hospitals and medical clinics, schools, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and more. Safe Kids Snohomish County is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing unintentional injury. Safe Kids Snohomish County was founded in 1999 and is led by Providence Regional Medical Center Everett.

For more information on Child Passenger Safety Week and to find the child seat inspection station nearest you visit <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>. To locate local resources visit [www.snosafekids.org](http://www.snosafekids.org).

