



Johnson County Government Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK IS CELEBRATED WITH A FREE CAR SEAT CHECK UP EVENT

(OLATHE, KS – **SEPTEMBER 14, 2012**)

What: Child Passenger Safety Seat Check Up Event - Celebrating Child Passenger Safety Week
(September 16-22, 2012)

When: Saturday, September 22, 2012

Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm, No appointment needed!

Where: McCarthy Chevrolet (inside Service Department)
675 N. Rawhide, Olathe, Kansas 66061

Safety specialists will examine child car seats at the event for proper use, installation, age/size appropriateness, and also alert parents to any recalled products. Please allow 30 minutes for child's seat check (30 minutes per seat).

Parents are making five critical, but fixable, mistakes when using car seats, according to new data by Safe Kids Worldwide and the General Motors Foundation. With so many safety features now available in both cars and car seats, parents are urged to make sure their kids are getting every advantage by taking the time to do a 15-minute at-home annual checkup.

73 percent of car seats are not being used correctly. To find out why, Safe Kids analyzed data from more than 100,000 car seat inspections. Some findings proved that progress is being made, including that 98 percent of children arrived at car seat inspections in the back seat and 98 percent of the children were using some type of restraint.

Yet, the data also revealed that parents and caregivers still have some work to do to ensure their children are restrained properly. Five safety steps every parent should take include keeping their children in rear-facing car seats for as long as possible, ideally until age two, selecting the correct seat for the weight, height or age of the child, tightening the harness enough and knowing when to let kids ride in the front seat.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death to children ages 1 to 13. In a nationwide effort to educate parents about the importance of car seat safety during Child Passenger Safety Week, Safe Kids and the General Motors Foundation are asking every parent to take 15 minutes for an at-home car seat checkup using the Safe Kids downloadable checklist.

Car Seat Checkup Checklist

- Right Seat.** This is an easy one. Check the label on your car seat to make sure it's appropriate for your child's age, weight and height. Like milk, your car seat has an expiration date. Just double check the label on your car seat to make sure it is still safe.
- Right Place.** Kids are VIPs, just ask them. We know all VIPs ride in the back seat, so keep all children in the back seat until they are 13.
- Right Direction.** You want to keep your child in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible, usually until around age 2. When he or she outgrows the seat, move your child to a forward-facing car seat. Make sure to attach the top tether after you tighten and lock the seat belt or lower anchors. Continue to use a booster seat until your child properly fits in the seat belt, usually when they are between the ages of 8 and 12.
- Inch Test.** Once your car seat is installed, give it a good shake at the base. Can you move it more than an inch side to side or front to back? A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch.
- Pinch Test.** Make sure the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check car seat manual). Now, with the chest clip placed at armpit level, pinch the strap at your child's shoulder. If you are unable to pinch any excess webbing, you're good to go.

The checklist takes only 15-minutes to complete and provides important tips that will help parents ensure their car seat is used and installed properly.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of our children, and we're encouraged by the progress that is being made," said Mike Robinson, Vice President, Sustainability and Global Regulatory Affairs for General Motors. "To ensure that our children – our most precious cargo – are safe in cars, we recommend parents take 15 minutes to check their child's car seat annually. Our children visit the doctor every year for an annual checkup, we need to give their car seats an annual checkup, too. A quick home checkup could save a life."

For more information about car seat safety checks call Safe Kids Johnson County at: 913-477-8312.

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About Johnson County

Located in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City Metropolitan Region, Johnson County, Kansas is a community of choice with a current population of more than 544,000, making it the most populated of the 105 counties in Kansas, but traditionally having the lowest mill levy in the state. Johnson County offers a vibrant quality of life including nationally recognized schools, libraries and parks where businesses and families choose to locate and call their home. For more information visit the county's website at www.jocogov.org.

