**CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE (CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY - GENERAL)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email Address]**

**Parents and Caregivers:   
Make Sure Your Children are in The Right Seat**

**[City, State]** — The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is reminding parents and caregivers that child passengers are best protected in a crash when they are buckled correctly in the right seats for their ages and sizes. Car seats and booster seats have height and weight limits, and children should stay in each seat until they outgrow those limits. NHTSA encourages parents to shift the question from *When can I move my child to the next seat?* to *How long can I safely keep my child in this seat?* And it’s important for all children under 13 to ride in the back seat as air bags are designed for adult passengers in the front seat.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children, and the latest research from NHTSA shows that 46% of car seats are misused. Common issues include children being in the wrong type of car seat for their age and size, and car seats being installed improperly — both of which leave children vulnerable to injury in a crash. Every day in 2022, three children 14 and younger were killed in traffic crashes and another 429 were injured. “You don’t want to be overconfident when it comes to child safety,” said **[Spokesperson]**. “Caregivers need to know for sure that their children are in the right seats and that those seats are installed correctly.”

**[Spokesperson]** added that parents shouldn’t be in a rush to move their children to the next seat. “Kids may think they want to ditch the harness or the booster seat, but they’re not in charge of protecting themselves. Caregivers need to stay firm on car seat safety in order to protect their young passengers.” Keeping a child in the right seat for their age and size can make all the difference in a crash. Of the child passengers killed in crashes in 2022, more than a third (39%) were unrestrained. Car seats have been shown to reduce fatal injury by 71% for infants under 1 year old and by 54% for toddlers 1 to 4 years old in passenger cars.

Infants have the highest rate of car seat use among children who survived fatal crashes in 2022: For those under 1 year old, 93% of those infants were buckled. Once a child outgrows a rear-facing car seat, he or she is ready for a forward-facing car seat with a harness. Something caregivers often overlook on a forward-facing car seat is the tether; this essential component must be used to install a forward-facing car seat correctly. This keeps the seat from moving forward in a crash, preventing head injuries. Only after reaching the maximum height or weight limits of a forward-facing car seat — which takes longer than most parents think — a child should be buckled in a booster seat until tall enough to fit in an adult seat belt properly. Booster seats are a critical — but often misused — step between harnessed car seats and adult seat belts. If the seat belt doesn’t fit a child correctly, it won’t offer them the optimal protection in a crash.

In 2022, the number of children killed in passenger vehicle crashes was highest in the 4 to 7 and 8 to 12 age groups. As children grow, don’t forget to make sure your older children are just as protected as your little ones, and that all children stay in their harnessed car seats and booster seats until they reach the maximum weight or height limits. Once a child is ready to use a seat belt, parents should ensure that it fits correctly — that the seat belt lies across the upper thighs and is snug across the shoulder and chest, away from the face and neck — and that they wear it correctly every time they ride in the car. Whether it’s a drive down the street or across the country, the safest place for all kids under 13 is buckled up in the back seat.

[NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats) has free resources available to answer parents’ questions and point them in the right direction. And across the country, there are certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians who can help caregivers pick the right car seat, learn how to install it correctly, and know how to use it the right way on every trip. Parents turn to experts for many things, and child passenger safety shouldn’t be an exception. Learn about the different [car seat types](https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#find-right-car-seat-car-seat-types), read NHTSA’s research-based [recommendations](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/carseat-recommendations-for-children-by-age-size.pdf), and [find and compare](https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#find-right-car-seat-find-compare-seats) car seats.

For more information on child passenger safety, go to NHTSA.gov/therightseat.

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