

use your own seat belt to set a good example.

- Point out to children that by sitting elevated in a car or booster seat they will be able to see more out the car window.
- Car rental agencies in California must provide safety seats for rent by customers on request. You might still want to bring along your own seat.
- Never hold a child of any age on your lap – even for a short ride. Doing so increases the chance the child will be injured in a crash. And, buckling a seat belt over a child held in your lap does not lessen the danger of injury. Each person should ride with his or her own seat belt.

### For Child Care Providers

The law applies to you, too. You can be fined up to \$270 for transporting someone else's child without a car or booster seat. Decide whether your program will provide the safety seats for field trips or whether you will ask parents to supply car seats. Given the wide variety of vehicles and safety seats, not all safety seats fit well in all vehicles. Be sure to install the safety seats properly in your vehicle.

### Children Who Need Special Car Seats

There are a number of car seats designed for use with children with special needs. A few, such as the seats made by Columbia Medical Manufacturing (800) 454-6612 [www.columbiamedical.com](http://www.columbiamedical.com) and Tumble Forms (800) 475-5036 [www.sammonpreston.com](http://www.sammonpreston.com), fit stroller frames for double duty. Medical car seats may be purchased from [www.adaptivemall.com](http://www.adaptivemall.com). Information about the new Roosevelt medical car seat is available at [www.eztether.com](http://www.eztether.com). The Roosevelt is sold at National Seating & Mobility Hayward: (510) 856-0481. For medical vests (800) 323-6598 [www.ezonpro.com](http://www.ezonpro.com) A vest that zips in the back may be an appropriate restraint for a child with ADHD or ASD. Premature infants may require a car seat designed for babies who are low birth weight or a car bed. The hospital will determine the baby's need prior to discharge. To learn more about special needs transportation, visit the Riley Hospital for Children's Automotive Safety for Children Program at [www.preventinjury.org](http://www.preventinjury.org) or the American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

### Want To Know More?

#### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

For a car seat check up location in your area:

1-866-732-8243

or go to: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/> or

<http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

Call or go to [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) for information on car seat recalls. You can also request car seat handouts, including a "Shopping Guide for Child and Infant Safety Seats." The guide lists the manufacturers, models and price ranges of car seats which currently meet federal requirements.

#### California State Automobile Association

150 Van Ness Ave. S.F., CA 94102; (415) 565-4224

Call or write to request the AAA's excellent car seat safety brochures or go to [www.autoclub.org](http://www.autoclub.org).

#### California Highway Patrol

3601 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609; (510) 450-3821

Car seat brochures and information are available in person. Safety car seat checks available by appointment.

#### [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org)

Babies & Kids, Safest Car Seats

Provides information, ratings and recommendations on car seats and booster seats, as well as tips on how to install them properly.

#### Car Seat Program

##### Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland

747 52nd St. Oakland CA 94609; (510) 428 3045

Serves hospital, and NICU patients as well as those families who see a pediatrician at the Claremont Primary Access Clinic. On a case by case basis, Children's may also provide a car seat to a low income parent/caregiver. A referral to obtain a car seat for a parent/caregiver is made only by the organization that serves the family.

**Special thanks to Bonnie Lovette, RN, MS, PNP, Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician & Special Needs certified, Injury Prevention Coordinator, Trauma Services, Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland.**

## BANANAS HANDOUT

**Buckle Up...Be Safe!**



California law requires all children to be properly restrained in a correctly installed car seat until 6 years of age or 60 pounds in the back seat of the car.

The law applies to:

- Parents present when their children are in any vehicle, regardless of whether or not the parent is driving or owns the vehicle. In other words, if the parent is present, it is the parent, not the driver, who will receive the citation.
- Any driver transporting children when the parent is not present.
- Parents driving or riding in rental vehicles or any other driver of a rental vehicle if the parent is not present.

The law also requires retailers to sell only child passenger seats that conform to all federal safety standards.

If you spot improperly secured children in a vehicle, you can call (800) TELL-CHP to report the license number. The CHP will send a warning (not a ticket) to the registered owner.

BANANAS • 5232 Claremont Ave., Oakland, CA 94618 • 658-7353 • [www.bananasinc.org](http://www.bananasinc.org)

## What Happens If You Are In Violation Of The Law?

Any law enforcement officer can issue a warrant to appear in court. Charges may be dismissed only on the first offense, if the person charged can produce proof in court that a child passenger seat has been obtained and/or the person has attended a program providing education in the use of child passenger seat restraint systems. Failure to use a car seat can result in a citation and a fine of up to \$270 on first offense and \$675 on second offense. Special note: You can also receive a citation for any passenger over 6 or under 16 years who is not using an available seat belt. Passengers over age 16 who are not using seat belts can be cited individually.

## The Reasons Why We Have A Child Restraint Law

Automobile crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for young children. More than 1,451 children 14 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes in the year 2005; 203,000 were injured. Among those children killed, nearly 50% were unrestrained. Motor vehicle crashes (MVC) were the leading cause of death for kids 5-12 in California for the year 2004 (EPIC). MVC's are the leading cause of unintentional death among children in the US, and the leading cause of potential life lost (CDC 2005; NHTSA 2006). Many deaths and injuries could be prevented if every child was properly restrained. Not wearing a seat belt dramatically increases the chances of being ejected from a vehicle: The risk of death is four times as great if a person is thrown from a car. The total cost of motor vehicle occupant-related injury and death for children less than 14 years of age exceeds \$25.8 billion a year.

## Exceptions To The Law:

1) School buses and motor vehicles designed for more than 10 occupants; 2) emergency vehicles; 3) children for whom use of a car seat would be impractical because of physical unfitness, medical condition or size; and 4) drivers who use seat belts instead of car seats in a life-threatening emergency if the child is at least one year old.

## Tips to Remember When Buying A Car Seat

- Read the label; make sure it says the seat conforms to all applicable federal safety standards.
- Choose a seat which is appropriate for your child's weight, age, height and behavior.

- Not all models fit in all cars. Try the car seat before you buy it; be sure it fits your car's seats and seat belts.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions. A car seat can only fully protect your child if it is properly installed and used according to directions.
- Never buy a car seat that has been involved in an accident or whose history is unknown. Stress fractures to the plastic may not be visible.

## Buying A Safe Seat Isn't Enough

A seat isn't safe unless you install it properly and use it correctly every time you transport your child. Install the car seat in the rear seat of your car. Passenger airbags are a potential danger to small children. Airbags are not soft pillows. They come out of the dash at up to 200 mph in less than 1/25th of a second! A rear-facing child seat should never be placed in front of an airbag in the front seat. All children age 12 and under should be properly restrained in the back seat. It is recommended that a child stay in a properly secured restraint until 4' 9" tall. Save the manufacturer's instruction manual in a place where you can find it, for instance the glove compartment of the vehicle carrying the car seat. As your child grows, refer to the instructions to make sure you are still using the seat properly.

## Different Types of Car Restraints

### Infant Safety Seats

- babies must ride rear-facing in the back seat until at least one year of age and over 20 pounds
- never leave the carrying handle up when an infant seat is installed in the car. If the handle is left up, it may abruptly stop the crash-tested rotation of the car seat in a crash when it comes into contact with the vehicle seatback. The child's head may strike the handle in a crash resulting in severe head injury.

### "Convertible" Safety Seats

- birth to 40 pounds or 40 inches in height
- baby faces rear until at least one year old and 20 pounds. Children should remain rear-facing for as long as possible, until the manufacturer's rear-facing limits for the seat. An infant's head is large; his neck and spinal cord are fragile. If he is facing forward in a frontal crash, (the most common), his body is held back but his head is not. The neck

and spinal cord are stretched. When riding facing backwards, the whole body including the head, neck and torso, are cradled by the car seat which cushions the force of the crash for the child.

### Forward-Facing Combination Seats

- for children over one year of age and 20 pounds
- face forward only
- can be converted to a belt-positioning booster seat after child reaches 40 pounds

### Safety Booster Seats

- for children over 40 pounds and under the age of six, or weighing less than 60 pounds.
- use with vehicle's lap and shoulder belt
- use a high-back booster seat if your car's seat back is lower than your child's ears
- you can use a backless booster seat if your car's seat back is higher than your child's ears

### Shoulder/Lap Belts

- Lap belts should fit snugly across thighs and hips, not across a child's stomach. Shoulder belts should never cross a child's face or neck.

If a child can pass the five-step seat belt test, they are ready to use an adult seat belt. Go to: <http://www.carseat.org/>

1. Does the child sit upright with hips all the way back against the vehicle's seat back?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle's seat?
3. Is the lap belt below the abdomen, on the top part of the thighs, and snug across the hips?
4. Is the shoulder belt centered over the shoulder and across the chest?
5. Can the child stay seated in this position for the whole trip?

## Additional Car Seat and Car Safety Considerations

- Bring your baby home from the hospital in a car seat.
- Be consistent in using your car seat. Children who are used to the restraints are less likely to fight them. If your child fusses, pull over to the side of the road to quiet the child. However, present the issue as one where the child has no choice. And,