

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **Safe Kids Champaign County Partners with National Seat Check Saturday to Urge Parents and Caregivers to Get Their Child Safety Seats Inspected** **Over 90 child safety seat checkpoints will be held in Illinois**

**Champaign, IL** – The Illinois Department of Transportation/Division of Traffic Safety (IDOT/DTS), AAA and **Safe Kids Champaign County** urges parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seats are properly installed in their vehicles at the second annual “National Seat Check Saturday,” on Saturday, September 20, 2008. As part of National Child Passenger Safety Week (September 21-27) certified technicians will be available to provide free on-site child safety seat inspections from **9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Rogers in Rantoul**. Checkpoints across the state are sponsored by IDOT/DTS, AAA, Evenflo and Illinois Safe Kids.

“It’s the responsibility of every single parent and caregiver out there to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time,” said **Susan Butler, Safe Kids Champaign County Coordinator**. “We are urging everyone to get their child safety seats inspected. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes.”

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration research, 8,325 lives of children under age 5 have been saved by the proper use of child restraints during the past 30 years. In 2006, among children under 5, an estimated 425 lives were saved by child restraint use. Research shows that child restraints provide the best protection for all children up to age 8; after age 8, and when a child has reached 4’9” tall, safety belts provide the best protection. Illinois law requires child safety seat or booster seat use up to age 8.

For maximum child passenger safety, Butler said parents and caregivers should refer to the following *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on age and size:

1. For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds) 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 (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle safety belts fit properly. Safety belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4’9” tall).

4. When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the adult safety belts in the back seat, if they fit properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

For more information on Child Passenger Safety Week, a national effort to remind parents and caregivers of the lifesaving effect child safety seats have in protecting young children, please visit [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

To find a complete listing of Seat Check Saturday checkpoints in Illinois, please visit [www.buckleupillinois.org](http://www.buckleupillinois.org).

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