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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Safe Kids Champaign County, AAA, Dorel, and IDOT Urge Parents and Caregivers to Have Their Child Safety Seats Inspected**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Hosts “National Seat Check  
Saturday” on September 25<sup>th</sup>*

Champaign, IL – According to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 3 to 6 and 8 to 14. That is why Safe Kids Champaign County is urging parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seats are properly installed. As part of Child Passenger Safety Week (September 19-25, 2010), Safe Kids will have certified technicians available to provide free hands-on child safety seat inspections and advice on Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, “National Seat Check Saturday”, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD), 201 W. Kenyon Road, Champaign. This event is sponsored by AAA, Dorel, the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Division of Traffic Safety (IDOT/DTS), and Safe Kids Champaign County.

“It is the responsibility of every parent and caregiver to ensure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time,” said Safe Kids Coordinator at CUPHD, Reagen Bradbury. “We are urging everyone to have their child safety seats inspected. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes.”

Research shows that child restraints provide the best protection for all children up to age eight. From 1975 to 2008, 8,959 lives have been saved by the proper use of child restraints according to NHTSA. In 2008, among children under age five in passenger vehicles, an estimated 244 lives were saved by child restraint use (child safety seats and adult seat belts).

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For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers can visit their local inspection stations and refer to the following *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines that determine 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 specified by the seat manufacturer. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until at least age one and 20 pounds.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least age one and 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 four and 40 pounds).
3. By Illinois law, once children outgrow their forward-facing child safety seats (usually around age four and 40 pounds), they must ride in booster seats in the back seat until the age of eight. All children should ride properly restrained in the back seat.
4. Children are not ready for a safety belt until they are 4'9" tall and over the age of eight. They can use the adult safety belts in the back seat, if they 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 eight or when they are 4'9" tall).

Remember: All children younger than 13 years of age should ride in the back seat.

Safety belts are required in all seating positions in all cars, light trucks, and vans. It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to ride in the bed of a pickup truck.

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> , <http://www.facebook.com/childpassengersafety> or [www.buckleupillinois.org](http://www.buckleupillinois.org). For additional information regarding CUPHD services, visit the web at [www.c-uphd.org](http://www.c-uphd.org).

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