



CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY REMOTE EDUCATION

Consultation Guide

How can child passenger safety technicians (CPSTs) help caregivers in this time of COVID-19?

For many years, CPSTs have been assisting families over the phone with their car seat questions. While we cannot count this as an “inspection,” we can certainly provide education with the caregiver to make their child considerably safer.

Education vs. Inspection Car seat inspections are conducted in person, requiring a liability waiver to be signed by the caregiver allowing access to their child’s car seat and vehicle. Since caregivers cannot sign the waiver by phone, this method is strictly education. The CPST may use the provided Family Worksheet and questions (or check form) to gather the information from the caregiver but cannot submit it for analysis.

Car Seat Education Handout The caregiver should receive this handout before the phone call, if possible. The handout has a blank label for them to write the car seat information and has photos of the key parts of a seat that the CPST will be referencing during the call such as the harness slots, belt paths, tether and lower anchors. Ask the caregiver to familiarize themselves with their car seat(s) and be able to locate the specific parts before the call.

Explain the Good, Better, Best options to conduct the educational session with caregivers. The BEST option is to use a cell phone, preferably using Facetime or video chat. Having the caregiver send you pictures of the car seat is the BETTER option. Walking the caregiver through the basics over the phone with no visual is still GOOD. At any level, the caregiver is getting basic information, which will make their child safer.

Prepare caregivers for your educational call by asking that they prepare by:

- Locating the manufacturer’s label on the car seat that has make, model and date of manufacture, and expiration of each seat
- Knowing their child’s height and weight
- Having both their vehicle and car seat manuals handy during the call
- Arranging for a time to talk with the CPST when their child is safe and supervised. You will need their full attention especially if they go to the car

Explain again that this is basic education and does not replace an in-person inspection. Let them know you are using the Family Worksheet to guide the discussion and will confirm the following questions:

- Age, height and weight of each child
- Type of car seat using Family Worksheet (1 – 5)
- Do you have a new seat?
 - If no, explain and always refer them to their car seat manufacturer if the other option
 - expired
 - recalled
 - secondhand seats
- Has your car seat been in a crash?
 - If yes, explain
 - NHTSA crash criteria
 - Recommend they call the car seat manufacturer, if no other option to replace

Explain to the caregiver what to look for in the car: Ask caregiver the following questions, using Family Worksheet to write down their information.

- Number of occupants who ride in their vehicle
- Where the kids sit in the vehicle
- Will they use the seat belt or LATCH to install their car seat?
 - If LATCH and you are using the LATCH manual, obtain their vehicle information (make, model, year).

There is a flow chart in the new curriculum that you may find useful as you talk with the caregiver over the phone. It is provided as an attachment. **(DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO CAREGIVERS – ONLY FOR CPSTs)** As you learned in class, the caregiver just has to know how to lock the belt, not the names of everything.

Guide the caregiver through the following steps:

- Adjust the harness straps
- Tighten and loosen the harness straps
- Feed the seat belt or LATCH webbing through the car seat and connect to the vehicle
- Test to be sure the seat belt is locked, and the car seat is tightly affixed to the car- Inch Test
- Place their child into the seat. Confirm the position of the harness and child’s shoulders. Walk them through tightening the harness and conducting the Pinch Test.

If they still have questions: Refer the caregiver to their car seat manufacturer’s customer service department and document the recommendation. The caregiver will use the label they have identified on the car seat.

If you are a Safe Kids Coalition, register your phone sessions on the PMT. Please note, when the coronavirus pandemic has subsided, invite the caregivers you reached by phone to attend your inspection station or event. There is no substitute for an in-person official inspection. **Thank you for being a CPST!**

