Buckle Up for Life Announces Top Tips for Car Seat Safety and Expands to 11 New Markets

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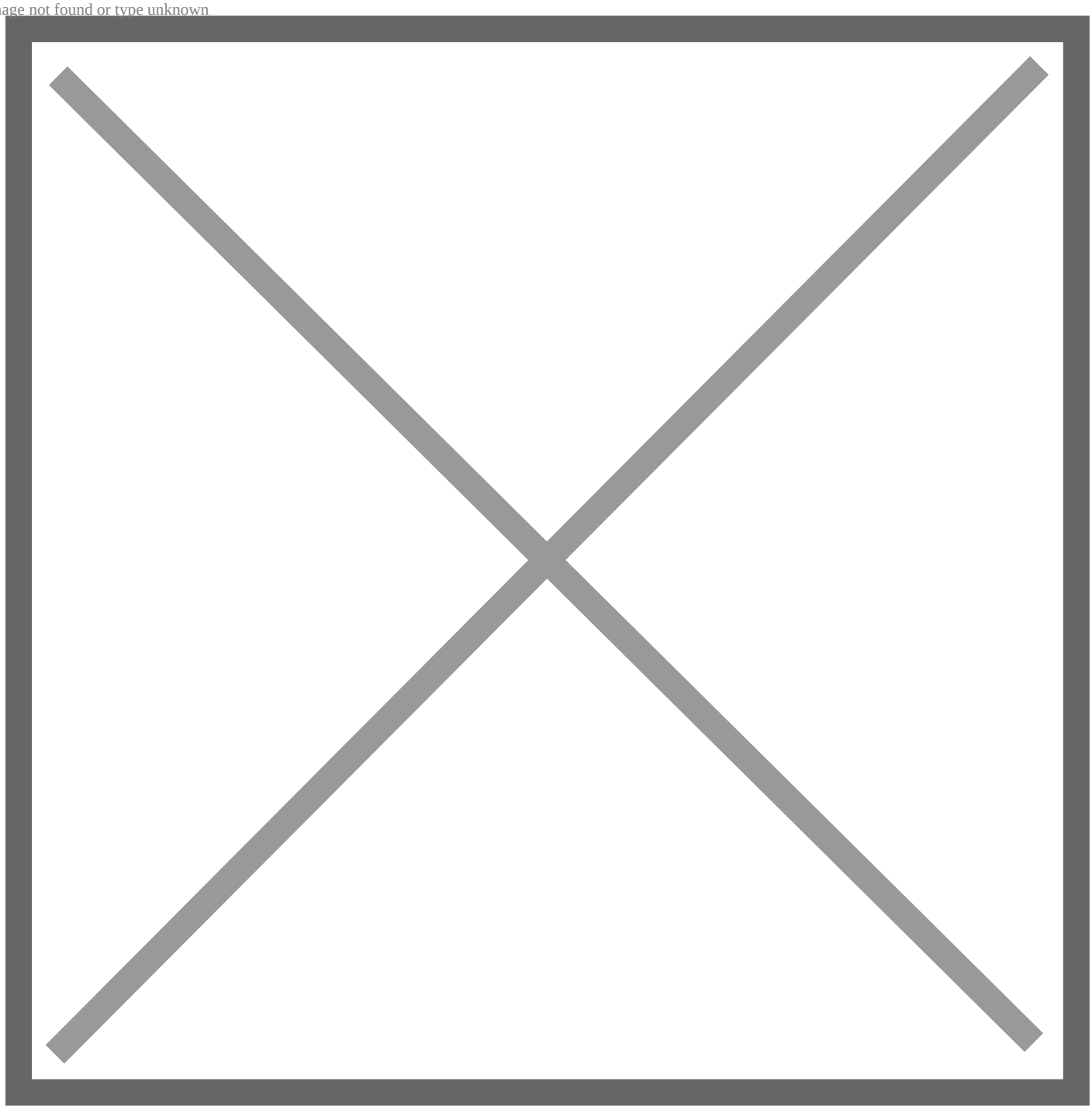

Plano, Texas (Sept. 15, 2016) – Whether you're a first-time parent, doting grandparent or seasoned baby sitter, car seats are not always the easiest things to figure out. In fact, 75 percent of seats in the U.S. are not used correctly.[1] That's why *Buckle Up for Life*, the national car seat education program from Toyota and Cincinnati Children's, is sharing its top safety tips, just in time for Child Passenger Safety Week (September 18-24). The program is also announcing an expansion to 11 new markets to help keep even more children safe.

"An alarming three out of four car seats are not installed properly. We can and must do better for our children," said Gloria Del Castillo, child passenger safety expert at Cincinnati Children's and specialist of community engagement for *Buckle Up for Life.* "We know that proper use of car seats and booster seats can help prevent many child injuries and deaths. That's why *Buckle Up for Life* teaches parents, caregivers and children about the proper use of car seats and provides free seats to families in need."

***Buckle Up for Life*'s Top Tips for Car Seat Safety To Help You Do-It-Yourself – and Do It Right**

1. **Vintage isn't always a good look: purchase your own new car seat.** When it comes to car seats, safety experts agree that it's best to purchase a new seat. This lets you know the seat's full history. For example, if it has been through a crash, its ability to protect your child may be compromised. Additionally, the plastic can degrade over time. If you do have a used car seat, check its expiration date, which can usually be found on a sticker affixed to the seat.
2. **Measure twice: check for fit and wrinkles in car seat straps.** After you've buckled your child in, pinch the car seat strap near their shoulders. If you can pinch a wrinkle in the fabric, tighten the strap until it is snug. Then grab the car seat at the bottom where it is attached to the car and tug from side to side and front to back. If the seat moves more than an inch in either direction, tighten it.
3. **Focus on inner beauty: all car seats sold in the U.S. meet the same federal safety standards.** Some seats may be more expensive than others based on fabric, padding or other bells and whistles, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are any safer. All car seats sold in the U.S. must meet the same federal child restraint safety standards.
4. **Give them a boost: children shorter than 4'9" need booster seats.** Little ones can be eager to sit like big kids. However, seat belts often don't fit young children properly and can ride up around their waists or necks, potentially causing injury during a crash. Children under 4'9" should sit in booster seats, which elevate them so that seat belts can fit properly.
5. **Call in the experts: there are many resources to help you get it right.** Don't hesitate to check out expert resources for additional tips and advice, such as the car seat installation videos found on BuckleUpForLife.org. The site also offers links to car seat inspection stations or child passenger safety technicians in your community.

***Buckle Up for Life* Expands To 11 New Markets and Launches the "Gift of Safety" Program**

This fall, *Buckle Up for Life* will expand to trusted partners in 11 new cities:

- American Family Children's Hospital, Madison, WI
- Cardon Children's Medical Center, Mesa, AZ
- City of Rocky Mount Fire Department, Rocky Mount, NC
- Dignity Health Mercy San Juan Medical Center, Sacramento, CA
- Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel, Portland, OR
- Safe Kids Grand Forks – Altru Health System, Grand Forks, ND
- Safe Kids Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
- Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Hartford, CT
- Trustees of Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN

- University Health System San Antonio, San Antonio, TX
- Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency, Detroit, MI

Also this fall, *Buckle Up for Life* will launch the "Gift of Safety" program, which will provide an additional 50 non-profit organizations across the country with 100 car seats each for families in their communities. Each parent or caregiver who receives a seat will also receive safety education and assistance from a certified child passenger safety technician.

"Cincinnati Children's has been a fantastic partner for more than a dozen years now. Together, we've made a real difference in improving child passenger safety across the country – one family at a time," said Mike Goss, General Manager, Social Innovation, Toyota Motor North America. "We look forward to helping even more children get places safely with *Buckle Up for Life*."

Since 2004, *Buckle Up for Life* has reached thousands of people with critical passenger safety information. Organizations that offered the program observed a marked improvement in members' auto safety behaviors, including:

- The average rate of children unrestrained in cars (i.e., not in a car seat or booster seat or fastened in a seat belt) decreased from one in four to fewer than one in 20;
- The average rate of children in car seats increased from roughly one in four to one in two; and
- The use of seat belts by adults increased by an average of 13 percent, from 68 percent to 81 percent.

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/LATCH