

Are Your Kids Ready For Summer Travel?

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New York, N.Y., (May 26, 2016) – Barbecues, fireworks, s'mores and swimming – they're summer classics. They rarely change because when you know something works, you stick with it. You know what else stands the test of time? Car seat safety tips.

However, a staggering three out of four car seats are incorrectly installedⁱ. This is so alarming because motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death among childrenⁱⁱ. The good news is that a properly installed car seat can help dramatically reduce injury and prevent death. That’s why [*Buckle Up for Life*](#), the national car seat safety program from Cincinnati Children’s and Toyota, is sharing the following tips, just in time for the busy summer road trip season.

1. **Always use the “Inch Test” and the “Pinch Test”.** *Pinch* the car seat strap near the child’s shoulder; if you can pinch a wrinkle in the fabric, tighten the strap until it is snug. For the “*Inch Test*”, grab the car seat from the back and bottom and tug from side to side and front to back. If the seat moves more than an inch in either direction, tighten it.
2. **Never add towels or extra layers between the seat and your child.** Car seats can get hot in summer weather, but don’t pile up towels in your child’s seat to keep them cool. Extra material could interfere with the seat’s ability to restrain the child in the event of a crash, so it is important to only use accessories and products specifically approved for use by the seat’s manufacturer.
3. **Take time to cool off; then buckle up.** If the car seat is hot because of high summer temperatures, take some extra time to cool the car down before placing your child in the seat. Test buckles to ensure they are not hot, and if they are, open the windows or turn on the air conditioner before buckling children in. Never leave children alone in the car, especially in the summer, when temperatures can escalate dangerously in a matter of minutes.
4. **Don’t rent a car seat.** If you are renting a car this summer, use your own car seat. When you rent a seat, you don’t know important facts about its history that could affect its ability to protect your child (*e.g.*, expiration date, crash history, etc.). The good news is that most airlines allow you to check your car seat for free.
5. **Secure loose items in the car.** Make sure all loose items – including summer travel essentials such as beach chairs, coolers, umbrellas and suitcases – are tightly secured in your vehicle. These objects could become projectiles in the event of a crash.

“During the summer, families are out and about for many fun activities – which can mean more time on the road.” said Gloria DelCastillo, child passenger safety expert at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and senior specialist for *Buckle Up for Life*. “We hope everyone takes the time to put these car seat tips in action to help our littlest passengers stay safe this summer and beyond.”

The tips are part of *Buckle Up for Life*’s mission to educate families about the proper use of car seats and seat belts and provide free car seats to families in need.

[\[i\] NHTSA](#)

[\[ii\] CDC](#)