

Buckle Up for Life Dispels Top Five Myths about Car Seats - Just in Time for Child Passenger Safety Week

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NEW YORK (Sept. 10, 2015) – It's no secret that driving with small children can be full of challenges – from battles over whose turn it is to pick the music to making sure you're fully stocked with snacks and supplies. But one thing that should not be a puzzle is how to keep them safe. That's why *Buckle Up for Life*, the national education program from Toyota and Cincinnati Children's, is sharing the top five myths and facts on car seats, just in time for Child Passenger Safety Week (September 13-19).

"We know from our work with thousands of families across the country over the past decade that car seats can be frustrating. In fact, an alarming three out of four are not installed properly," said Gloria del Castillo, child passenger safety expert at Cincinnati Children's and national program manager for *Buckle Up for Life*.

Del Castillo continued, "Working closely with leading children's hospitals across the country, *Buckle Up for Life* shares vital safety education with parents and caregivers. It is our hope that by doing this – including our latest campaign to dispel some very common myths – we can continue to make a difference in saving children's lives."

Buckle Up For Life presents the top five prevailing myths of car seats – and the real facts behind them – to help better protect young passengers.

1.MYTH: Used car seats are always okay.

FACT: Car seats have expiration dates.

Hand-me-downs may be convenient, but when it comes to car seats, they're not worth the risk. If the seat has been through a crash, it may be compromised. Additionally, the plastic can degrade over time. If you do have a used car seat, know its history and check the expiration date, which can usually be found on a sticker affixed to the seat and on the registration card.

2.MYTH: Older kids can sit in the front seat.

FACT: Kids under 13 are safest in the back.

Many think that once their children outgrow their car seats or booster seats, the front seat is fair game. However, the truth is that all children under age 13 are safest in the back seat.

3.MYTH: Seat belts alone protect small children.

FACT: Children shorter than 4'9" need booster seats.

Seat belts don't properly fit young children 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 protect them correctly.

4.MYTH: A one year old can ride in a forward-facing car seat.

FACT: Children should be rear-facing until age two.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children should remain in rear-facing car seats until age two, or until they exceed the height or weight limit for the car seat. According to a study by the University of Virginia, children under age two are 75 percent less likely to die or to be severely injured in a crash if they are rear-facing.

5.MYTH: Expensive car seats are safer than others.

FACT: All approved car seats are equally safe.

All car seat manufacturers are required to meet the same performance standards issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Some seats may be more expensive than others based on fabric, padding or other

bells and whistles, but that doesn't mean they are any safer.

Program Greatly Increased Rate of Children in Car Seats among Participants; Will Expand To Ann Arbor, MI and New Haven, CT

During its 2014 –2015 program cycle, *Buckle Up For Life* reached more than one thousand families with critical passenger safety information through partnerships with local children's hospitals and community organizations. Organizations that offered the program observed a marked improvement in members' auto safety behaviors, including:

- The rate of children unrestrained in cars decreased from one in four to fewer than one in 20.
- The rate of children in car seats increased from roughly one in four to one in two; and
- A 13 percent increase in use of seat belts for adults, from 68 percent to 81 percent.

This fall, *Buckle Up For Life* will launch in two new cities:

- C.S. Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI
- Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital in New Haven, CT

"Toyota has always been deeply focused on helping families get places more safely," said Latondra Newton, Toyota's Group Vice President and Chief Social Innovation Officer. "That is why we are so proud of the impact we've had with *Buckle Up for Life*. Together with our partners at Cincinnati Children's, we offer life-saving education and resources to families to better protect young passengers."

Toyota and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center partnered in 2004 to create *Buckle Up for Life*, a national education program for families to help keep child passengers safe. The program teaches parents and children about the proper use of car seats and seat belts and provides free car seats to families in need. Through partnerships with the leading children's hospitals in the country, *Buckle Up For Life* has reached more than 23,000 people in 14 cities. Toyota's sponsorship has provided funding for over 40,000 car seats for families in need.