

# **Car Seat Check Event On Sept. 25 By HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital And O'Fallon-Shiloh EMS**

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O'FALLON – Every day in Illinois, thousands of parents and caregivers travel with children in their vehicles. While some children are buckled in properly in the correct car seats for their age and size, most are not, if they are buckled up at all. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of children, and the latest research from the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that nearly half (46%) of car seats are misused.

To support these important safety measures, HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital and O'Fallon-Shiloh EMS are participating in Child Passenger Safety Week, Sept. 19-25. It is a campaign dedicated to helping parents and caregivers ensure their children ride as safely as possible — every trip, every time.

A free Car Seat Check event will be held Saturday, Sept. 25 from 9 to 11 a.m. in the parking lot of St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

“By attending the car seat event on Sept. 25, parents can be sure their kids are riding as safely as possible,” said EMS Division Supervisor Jeremy Sherman, EMTP. “The No. 1 goal is to make sure every child leaves the event safer than they arrived. Certified Child Passenger Safety technicians will check the seat for a secure fit, explain the law, look up recalls and offer more information on the proper use of safety seats.”

Educational materials will be provided to parents and caregivers at the event. To view additional information online or to learn more about Child Passenger Safety Week, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/right-seat>. Always remember to register your car seat and booster seat with the car seat manufacturer so you are notified in the event of a recall.

“As parents and caregivers, we have a long list of things we do for our children to show our love. One of the simplest and most important things on the list should be to make sure they are in the right car seat for their age and size,” Sherman said. “Get your car seats checked. Make certain they are installed correctly; the kids are in the right seats and they are buckled correctly.”

## **Car Seats versus Booster Seats**

There is also a deadly misconception that a certain type of vehicle may offer greater protection for your child. In 2019, 47% of unrestrained children killed in vehicle crashes were riding in vans, followed closely by SUVs (42%), and light trucks (42%). Children are safest when correctly secured in the right car seats or booster seats for their ages and sizes — no matter the vehicle type. Regardless of how safe you think your vehicle may be, it is never safe, nor legal, to let your child ride unbuckled.

NHTSA recommends keeping children rear-facing as long as possible, up to the top height and weight allowed by their particular seats. It's the best way to keep them safe. Once a child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, he or she is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether. After outgrowing the forward-facing car seat, a child should be placed in a booster seat until tall enough to fit in a seat belt properly.

Booster seats are an essential step between car seats and seat belts. These transitional seats position the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body. Don't feel pressured to put your child in a seat belt too soon. If your child is ready to use a seat belt, ensure the seat belt fits correctly. Bottom line: The safest place for all children under 13 is buckled up in the back seat.