



Sequatchie Valley Head Start Newsletter

November/December 2014 A Parent Newsletter

It's all about children and families

The mission of Sequatchie Valley Head Start is to create a nurturing place where children, families, and staff can work through community partnerships to exceed Head Start's national goals.

Policy Council Meeting

The next Policy Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16th at 10 a.m. Central time (11 Eastern). This meeting will be a phone conference call. You can call in at (605) 475-3235 access code: 887536#. Please remember this is a long distance phone call and members are welcome to call in from centers.

[Car Seats: Requirements for Infants Through Elementary School Students](#) [Child](#)

Motor vehicle injuries are a leading cause of death among children in the U.S., but many of these fatalities can be prevented with child car seats that are installed and used properly. **What the Law Says**

Tennessee's Child Passenger Restraint Law outlines the ways parents and caregivers can keep kids safer in cars by buckling children in age- and size-appropriate car seats, booster seats and seat belts to reduce the risk of serious and fatal injuries. Here's a summary of the law.

Birth to age 1, weighing 20 pounds or less: rear-facing car seat. For the best possible protection, infants and children under age 1, or any child weighing 20 pounds or less, should be buckled in a rear-facing car seat, in the backseat, until they reach the upper weight or height limits of their particular seat. Check the seat's owner's manual and/or labels on the seat for weight and height limits.

Age 1 to 3, weighing more than 20 pounds: forward-facing car seat Children in this age and weight group must be secured in a child safety seat in a forward-facing position in the backseat, until at least age 3 or when they reach the upper weight or height limit

of their particular seat, according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

Age 4 to 8, less than 4 feet 9 inches in height: booster seat Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat (by reaching the upper height or weight limit of their seat), they should be buckled in a booster seat until seat belts fit properly, in the backseat, according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions. (Note: If the child is older than age 8 but is shorter than 4 feet 9 inches, he or she must still use a booster seat meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.)

Age 9 to 12, more than 4 feet 9 inches in height: seat belt Children no longer need to use a booster seat once seat belts fit them properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lies across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lies across the chest (not the neck), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The recommended height for proper seat belt fit is 57 inches. Remember to keep children properly buckled in the backseat for the best possible protection.

Age 13 to 15: seat belt. Children at these ages must be secured by using safety belts meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards. More than 60 percent of vehicle occupants killed in crashes in Tennessee were not wearing safety belts. Research shows it is almost nine times safer to wear your safety belt, according to the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office.

How Police Enforce the Law - Police officers observing violations of Tennessee's Child Passenger Restraint Law are permitted to stop drivers to enforce the law. The driver of the car is responsible for making sure that children under age 16 are properly restrained and may be charged and fined \$50 for violating the law.

If the child's parent or legal guardian is present in the car but not driving, the parent or legal guardian is responsible for making sure that the child is properly transported and may be fined for noncompliance. Visit the [Click It or Ticket website](#) for more information about the law.

More Child Restraint Safety Tips - The CDC provides additional child car seat safety tips. Here are a few.

Install and use car and booster seats properly. Follow the seat's owner's manual, or get help installing a car or booster seat from a nationally certified child passenger safety (CPS) technician. (See "Getting a Child Fitted for a Car Seat" below.)

The rear seat is the safest place in the vehicle. When in doubt, remember that infants face backward; toddlers face forward.

Don't seat children in front of an airbag. Airbags can kill young children riding in the front seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in front of an air bag. Buckle all children age 12 and under in the backseat.

Seat children in the middle of the backseat. Buckle children in that seat when possible, because it is the safest spot in the vehicle.

Use proper restraints every trip. Buckle children in car seats, booster seats or seat belts on every trip, no matter how short.

Adults should always wear a seat belt. Set a good example by always using a seat belt yourself.

For more info from the CDC on how to correctly use a car or booster seat and when, [click here](#).

Getting a Child Fitted for a Car Seat Trained and certified CPS technicians will teach you everything you need to know to make sure your car seat is installed and used correctly. Here are some ways to find a certified technician near you:

Attend a free car seat inspection event sponsored by Safe Kids Tennessee.

Find a certified CPS technician through the National CPS Certification Program.

Use the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's directory to find a child car seat inspection station near you.

Find a child safety seat fitting station in your area from the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office.

What to Expect From a Certified CPS Technician

Certified technicians will inspect your child car seat, free of charge (in most cases), and show you how to correctly install and use it.

Find out **how to prepare** for getting a car seat checked by a certified CPS technician and what to do during and after the car seat checkup.

Find out more about **what you should expect** from a certified CPS technician.

If You Can't Afford a Child Safety Seat If you absolutely cannot afford to purchase a safety seat for your infant or older child, there are several local agencies that may be able to furnish one for you. To find the agency nearest you, email **Rachel Heitmann** at the Tennessee Department of Health, or call 615-741-0368.

