Tech Talk

High-Visibility CPS Enforcement Campaign Aims To Save Lives
By Karen Daily, GTIPI Intern

The University of Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI), supported by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, has teamed up with local law enforcement, public health officials, non-profit organizations, and other advocates to form the Child Passenger Safety Misuse Task Force. The task force aims to combat traffic-related childhood injuries through a high-visibility information campaign that addresses improperly restrained children. The campaign will be followed by focused law enforcement, when citations may be issued for misuse.

Parents and caregivers in Rockdale County have free access to a number of local organizations that teach correct installation and use of car seats before the March enforcement begins.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), when used properly, car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers in passenger cars. According to NHTSA, car seat, booster seat, and seat belt misuse rates vary from 74 percent to 90 percent. "Car crashes are a leading killer of young children," said Don Bower, GTIPI project director. "Parents want to transport their kids safely, but car seats and belt systems can be complicated. A quick check can identify and correct some serious misuse." Parents and caregivers seeking education from a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) should refer to the following agencies:

- By appointment, Rockdale County Fire and Rescue, 770-278-8422
- By appointment, Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute, 678-413-4281
- By appointment, Safe Seats 4 Kids, Newton Medical Center, 770-385-4396
- Contact Missy Braden, Rockdale County Health Department, 770-785-4345, monthly classes offered for families demonstrating financial need

During the checkup, a CPST will fill out a checklist addressing selection, position, installation, harnessing, expiration, and potential recalls for the car seat. This one-on-one appointment typically takes 20-30 minutes and will help ensure the caregiver is comfortable using the seat correctly. For more information about child passenger safety, visit www.safercar.gov/parents.To learn the specifics of Georgia's child restraint law, check www.gahighwaysafety.org.
Questions About the LATCH Manual
By Reshma Punjani, CPSTI

What exactly is the LATCH manual?
The LATCH manual is a resource to guide CPS Technicians and Instructors on the proper use of the LATCH system in vehicles. The LATCH manual is published every two years by Safe Ride News.

What are the benefits of owning a LATCH manual?
Often times, caregivers need assistance installing child restraints in their vehicles and may not have the vehicle's owner's manual available. For those technicians working with caregivers, the LATCH manual can serve as a primary resource to locate lower anchor positions as well as top tether anchor positions in vehicles. For those agencies who regularly work with caregivers in the field of CPS, the LATCH manual is a great resource to have to ensure proper CR installation.

Do I really need to buy an updated manual?
The LATCH manual is updated every two years to include newer vehicles along with updates to various weight requirements and changes to federal standards.

What's new about the 2015 LATCH manual?
The 2015 LATCH manual includes information regarding the amendment to FMVSS 213 about the weight limits for using the LATCH system. Additionally, the new LATCH manual includes information about the use of inflatable seat belts with various child restraints and routing instructions for tether connectors. The appendix also includes additional information about installing child restraints in the center seating position.

How much does the LATCH manual cost?
The LATCH manual costs $39.00, which also includes shipping. For agencies needing multiple copies of the LATCH manual, bulk prices are also available.

CAR SEATS: The Safest & Most Unsanitary
By Babatunde Fahn, MPH, CPSTI

Car seats are, by far, the safest form of transportation for any child under 57 inches tall who occupies a vehicle passenger seat: however, that safety may come with a few unexpected passengers. Car seats have been known to carry several strands of deadly germs and some used car seats have also been known to hold twice the germs as your average household toilet. Some of the microorganisms found on car seats include E. coli and Salmonella, bacteria that can lead to serious illnesses. According to one study conducted by the car seat manufacturer Maxi-Cosi, on average about half of caregivers wash the cover on their car seat twice a year. Some manufacturers recommend caregivers remove the cover from the seat shell and disinfect it in a conventional washing machine. However, during wash cycle the seat cover may permanently shrink and may be hard to secure back on the shell of the seat. The safest way to ensure that a child restraint is properly cleaned is to cleanse the cover with tap water and mild soap without removing it from the seat shell. Cleaning the cover while it is attached to the seat shell will remove most harmful germs and ensure the child restraint is assembled for proper use. With that said, it is worth noting that scientists also suggest that some exposure to germs is actually good for children, referring to the theory of Hygiene Hypothesis. However, it is still recommended that car seats be sanitized on a regular basis per the manufacturers’ instructions.
According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children between the ages of 8 and 12 who have not reached 4 feet 9 inches tall need a booster seat while traveling in a vehicle. As we know, booster seats provide the best protection for young children who are not big enough to fit properly in a seat belt. Consistent booster seat usage is a best practice strategy for reducing risk of injuries for young children. Grainne Kelly, founder of Bubble Bum Car Booster seat, created a product that will help to increase consistent usage of the booster seat for children who meet the height and age requirement.

The Bubble Bum Booster seat is a portable, lightweight (< ½ lb.) booster seat. The seat easily deflates and folds flat for easy transport. This seat is ideal for use on vacation, in rental cars, taxis, and carpooling. The Bubble Bum Car Booster seat comes with a belt positioning clip and is suitable for all vehicles with a three-point harness belt system.

To learn more about the Bubble Bum Car Booster seat visit http://www.bubblebum.co/us/.

New Testing, New Technology
By Chelsia Brodie, CPST

As of January 2014, NHTSA proposed upgrades to its national safety standards that includes side impact testing. With side impact testing, child restraint (CR) manufacturers are able to determine the effectiveness of their CR protecting a child’s head, neck, and upper torso. In response to these proposed requirements, two manufacturers have already patented new side impact technology to protect infants and small children.

The first upgrade is Maxi Cosi’s G Cell Technology. The G Cell Technology is unique in both design and purpose. The G Cell is hexagonal shaped thermoplastic elastomer, which mimics a honeycomb structure. This honeycomb design covers the shell of the seat and creates a crumple zone. As the CR comes into contact with crash forces, G Cells absorb the energy and ride down crash forces.

Maxi Cosi’s next development is named AirProtect Technology. This state-of-the-art air release system was designed through a collaboration between manufacturer Dorel and Kettering University. The AirProtect system is designed with padding that compresses during impact, releases air, and increases “ride down time”. Crash forces are then absorbed and diverted away from the child. Both G Cell and AirProtect Technology can be found in Maxi Cosi Prezi infant seat and the Maxi Cosi Euro Convertible.

The final contributor is Chicco’s DuoZone Side-Impact Protection. The DuoZone targets continuous protection of the head and shoulders throughout a child’s development. As of January 2015, Chicco’s Kidfit high back booster debuted this design with 10 adjustable height positions and padded ‘wings’ around the head and shoulders. This 2-in-1 booster grows with the child and encourages CR use up to 110lbs.

For more information about these seats and others visit www.maxi-cosi.com or www.chiccoshop.com.
Need another copy of your CPST card? Go to cert.safekids.org and log in.
At the bottom of your profile page, click the link that states
“Click here for Your Wallet Card/Certificate.”