



Child Passenger Safety Advokit | September 2021

Section 1: Introduction & AAP Recommendations

Car seats save lives: Whether it's a front-facing booster seat or a rear-facing car seat, decades of data demonstrate their importance. In November 2018, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated its child passenger safety (CPS) best practice recommendations for parents, drivers and state governments. They called for 1) children to ride in a rear-facing car safety seat for as long as possible, 2) children to ride in a forward-facing car safety seat from when they outgrow a rear-facing seat through at least age four, 3) the use of belt-positioning boosters from when a child outgrows their forward-facing seat until at least 8 years of age, and 4) lap and shoulder seat belts for children who have outgrown a booster seat. The AAP also recommended that all children younger than 13 years ride in the back seat, and that parents be encouraged to delay the transitions between seats for as long as possible to maximize a child's protection on the road.¹

Making kids safer in motor vehicles is a crucial part of Safe Kids' DNA, and we must keep up to date with new research, new technology and engineering relating to car seats. Laws should keep pace with those factors as well. Passing laws is only one piece of the puzzle; education, enforcement and awareness are essential components in any effective behavior change effort. Sometimes, laws and awareness go hand in glove because they stimulate each other, with new and improved laws translating to greater awareness.

15 states have passed laws requiring children to ride in a rear-facing car seat until age 2 or reaching the seat manufacturer's recommended height or weight limit. Safety advocates including Safe Kids coalitions, AAP chapters and other groups have led efforts to push for similar changes in other states. This Safe Kids "Advokit" is designed to provide you with tools and ideas to get started seeking improvements to your state's child passenger safety law in line with the AAP's recommendations.

The AAP's best practice recommendations for child passenger safety are below:

1. All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat (CSS) as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their CSS's manufacturer. Most convertible seats have limits that will permit children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more.
2. All children who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their CSS should use a forward-facing CSS with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their CSS's manufacturer.

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3. All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their CSS should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 ft 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age.
4. When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for optimal protection.
5. All children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the rear seats of vehicles for optimal protection.

Advocacy: Making the Pieces of the Puzzle Fit

Though every state has a CPS law in place, they are all different from each other. Any new additions or modifications to CPS laws will have to fit into existing state laws, almost like adding pieces to a jigsaw. Rather than providing you with a brand new puzzle through what is commonly known as a “model law,” this Advokit will supply you with the pieces to fit into your state’s puzzle.

Section 2: Eight Steps to Mount a Successful Campaign

1. What Does The Law Say?

Determine what the law says in your state and subsequently figure out how you specifically want to change it. You can find the laws of your state on the following websites:

- [Governors Highway Safety Association](#)
- [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#)
- [National Council of State Legislatures](#)

2. What Does the Data Say?

Almost every successful safety legislative effort starts with supportive data based on numbers and science. The data and research are crucial for several reasons: 1) determining whether the law change will save lives; 2) developing the bill’s language and 3) supporting the campaign to pass it. This means collecting state specific data regarding traffic crashes, and addressing concerns in these accidents such as: How many have died? How many are injured? What are the ages of the victims?

Considering the idiom that “all politics is local,” you might need to develop data that looks at a specific legislator’s district. Local data is, unfortunately, harder to find. The pediatric departments and ERs of your hospitals, however, might be able to help, as well as your state’s Child Fatality Review team.

Key data points for a child passenger safety campaign include:

- What is the fatality rate in the state involving kids 19 and under, or under 8? ER visits?
- How does your state compare to other states? How do they fair against those states that have passed a more advanced law?
- At what rates do people wear seat belts and use car seats?

The most useful data source is NHTSA’s [Fatality Analysis Reporting System \(FARS\)](#). It is indispensable but also complicated and frustrating. It might be possible to recruit an epidemiologist or a graduate student at a local university, or researchers at a local children’s hospital to help you find accurate numbers.

You may also need to make the case using medical research supporting the change. A big component of the anatomical basis for rear-facing recommendations is the size of a young child’s head compared to the rest of his/her body. A child 0-23 months has a high center of gravity, and forward-facing placement can result in severe injuries to the head, neck and spinal cord. Furthermore, when the toddler is seated

in the rear-facing position, the considerable energy of a car crash will spread over the entire back of the child, literally head to toe, further limiting the injury risk.

Communicating Your Data Focus: At Safe Kids, we have made a strategic decision that many of our policy documents we provide will include footnotes with citations to the sources of data, scientific opinions and critical information.

Key Data Points:

- For 2019, motor vehicle crashes are the 2nd leading cause of unintentional deaths of kids ages 0-4 and the leading cause of death for kids ages 5 to 19.²
- Kids under the age of two are 75 percent less likely to sustain a serious injury or die when they are in a rear-facing car seat. The use of car seats reduces the risk of mortality in infants 0-1 year by 71 percent and toddlers 1-4 years old by 54 percent.³
- In 2017, the lives of an estimated 325 kids ages 4 and under were saved because they were seated in child restraints.⁴
- For every fatality that occurs during a car crash, approximately 18 children are hospitalized, and more than 400 receive medical treatment for suspected injuries.⁵

3. Stories: Lives Lost, Lives Saved

Passage of such laws is, at its core, about people, and making their lives better and safer. Data is indispensable to drive policy change, but another powerful tool are the stories we hear working in child passenger safety. Tell the stories of real people in your state. They can be about saved lives due to attentiveness towards best practices, or unfortunately about tragedies. It is also helpful to find human-interest stories that happened in the districts of those who are on the committee with jurisdiction over the bill. Nothing will move the public and legislators like the personal stories of those who have experienced the loss of a child because they were not properly restrained.

Recruiting a parent for this purpose is one of the hardest jobs you will have as a child safety advocate. It includes finding parents who lost a child in a tragedy, and then collaborating with them to be a part of the campaign. There are times when parents are courageous enough to become involved in a campaign for stronger child safety as a way to honor their lost one. Yet despite their bravery, the cold call to a parent who has lost a child will be one of the hardest calls you will ever make.

Positive stories are compelling, too. They involve parents with a child who survived a crash due to proper restraint while sitting in their car seat. At Appendix 3, you will find a sample composing true stories of kids who were able to live another day because of car seats, their correct installation and CPS inspections.

Identifying parent and community advocates is a critical part of a safety change effort. Your campaign can employ their stories as a part of press interviews, speaking at press conferences, testifying before legislative hearings, lobbying to legislators so that they sponsor or support the bill, encouraging a

Naming the Bill After Victim

A real life example of the importance of stories is the ever growing trend of naming bills after victims of the problem you are trying to resolve or improve. Many safety bills have been named after a person whose tragedy could have been avoided. One of the most prominent is a gun control measure named after President Ronald Reagan's press secretary who was shot in attempted assassination of his boss, the "Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act." A law to provide assistance to people with HIV and AIDS is the "Ryan White Care Act."

Governor to sign a bill, and much more. Other compelling advocates are CPS technicians, who have passion, expertise, and their own stories about how their work has affected their communities.

4. Know What You're Up Against

Once you have found data and human-interest stories for the case you will make, it is time to research your opposition. Know their arguments. Are there groups that could be opposed to a new CPS law? If so, who? What are their arguments? Learn what they are and develop counters to them.

In an advocacy campaign, you are like a lawyer making a case. Good lawyers try to know the good and bad about their own cases. The following are some of the arguments that often come up in occupant protection campaigns:

Arguments For:

Child Anatomy: Because the head of a child (under 4 years old) is around 20 percent of their anatomy, they need the support of a rear-facing seat in the event of a crash.

Saved Lives: This is simple. Car seats, and other forms of occupant restraints, save lives.

- Car seats reduce the risk of death in car crashes by 71 percent for infants and 54 percent for toddlers ages 1 to 4.⁶
- Between 1975 and 2017, child restraints have saved an estimated 11,606 lives of children ages 4 and younger.⁷
- In 2017 alone, restraint use saved the lives of 352 children ages 4 years and younger.⁸
- Booster seats reduce the risk for nonfatal injury by 45 percent for children ages 4 to 8 years, compared to seat belts alone.⁹

Legislative Effectiveness and Building Awareness: Parents look to laws for how to transport their child. (Research supporting this is covered on page 7.)

Arguments Against:

Cost Tax Dollars: State budgets are always tight and legislation--which may cost an ample amount of state funding--are even harder to pass. In many states, legislators are required to file a document estimating the budget implications when they introduce legislation. There would be cost implications of a new car seat bill because of the changes the bureaucracy would have to make.

- **Your Response:** The tax dollar argument is easily turned around because highway deaths and injuries are costly to states, and thus making roads and highways safer saves tax dollars.
- Many states require legislators to file a document—or a budget office has to prepare a report--estimating the budget implications of new legislation. It would be helpful to influence the preparation of a fiscal note. Safe Kids has prepared a document on how to research and write a fiscal note, which can be found [here](#).

Hard for Police to Enforce: How would police enforce the law? Will it make their jobs tougher? This has always been an issue with car seat law enforcement, and even more so with rear-facing car seat laws. Simply put, it can be harder for a police officer to see how occupants are restrained in the rear-seat. Thus, these laws are hard to enforce and make life tougher for our police.

- **Your Response:** Parents look to the law to determine how to place their kids in a car.
- We believe that “high visibility enforcement” (HVE) campaigns like “Click It or Ticket” should include car seat use. Though federal funds, which support such campaigns, do not require HVE campaigns to

focus on car seats, a state can opt to include this form of enforcement. Some states do this very successfully.

- This argument underscores an important first-step strategic decision: at the very beginning of your campaign, you must engage the police organizations in your states. Most likely, this will not be a hard ask because, historically, law enforcement officers have been supportive of laws requiring the use of car seats.

“Nanny State:” “Government should stay out of our lives. Parents know best how to keep their kids safe.” Several websites advocate for “free range child rearing,” and argue against child safety laws. The most prominent leader of the free range movement, Lenore Skenazy, termed the attitude surrounding her movement as “Worst First Thinking,” which means, “coming up with the worst thing that could possibly happen and then proceeding as if it’s *likely* to happen.” These, the argument goes, are examples of government overreaching.

- **Your Response:** Ask a pediatrician. This parental guidance, translated into a law, is based on science and evidence.
- Most parents ask for laws to help them understand how to keep their kids safe.
- This law is about a common-sense approach to dealing with the leading cause of death for kids: Motor Vehicle Crashes.
- Most laws are meant to cover events that happen rarely. Murders are rare, but they are against the law.

Parental Perception of a Child’s Comfort: Though backed by evidence and medical research, the rear-facing safety measure is sometimes seen as counter-intuitive. Many parents have a feeling that children will be, and feel, less safe when their view is blocked. They also report that a tiny child seated that way will be scared because they cannot see their mom or dad. This is an argument many CPS technicians hear. For older and larger kids, there is a tremendous amount of concern over comfort and risk for leg injuries.

- **Your Response:** The law is based on real evidence and backed by pediatricians. Small children may cry for a small time when they are placed in a car but will ultimately stop in most cases. Sometimes, the movement of a car is soothing to a child.¹⁰

5. Creating a One-Pager

Your next step should be to create a short, one page document that explains your goals in a concise, easy-to-read format. When visiting with legislators, or sending information to allies, it is best not to overwhelm them with information. In other words, keep it short, simple, and with easily digestible data. (We have attached two examples of real-life one-pagers from South Carolina at Appendix 1 and Michigan at Appendix 2.)

The one pager should include:

- What the current law says.
- What you want to change.
- Two or three key data points, including evidence supporting the bill’s legislative goal.
- List of supportive organizations.
- Information on states that have already adopted similar legislation.

6. Identify Your Allies

Early on, it is important to identify and enlist your best allies. Building a diverse and strong coalition is imperative to a successful campaign. Below you will find groups who are frequently involved in child passenger advocacy campaigns. However, we encourage you to think outside the box in considering unique allies who can be helpful and who might have the ear of local legislators. For example, car dealerships are among the most visible small businesses in communities. First responders are special to public officials and could engage in your campaign, especially if they hold car seat safety inspections.

Potential child passenger safety allies:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- AAA (organized on a regional basis).
- National Safety Council.
- Other medical professionals and organizations.
- Advocates for Auto and Highway Safety.
- Governor's Highway Safety Administrators.
- Police, Law Enforcement, First Responders.
- Community CPS Technicians.
- Parent Advocates
- Mommy bloggers
- State Highway Traffic Safety Offices.

7. Find Legislative Sponsors

Your next step should be to identify legislators to introduce your bill in both chambers of the legislature, and win their commitment. Choosing the right legislator, who is committed to the cause of protecting children and who can be effective in pushing the bill through the legislative process, is important. It is best to have sponsors of the legislature's majority party and those on the Committee of primary jurisdiction, usually the Transportation Committee or Health and Safety.

This involves working proactively to know the interests and priorities of specific representatives and senators. Using that, you can build a case to convince their staff. Preparing to lobby on a specific piece of legislation involves research as to which elected official sits on the relative committees, their ideological leanings and what pet causes they have. Other key factors:

- Is there a legislator whose child or community experienced a tragic crash in their district?
- Are they parents or grandparents?
- Are they on the right committees or in the leadership?
- Do they have a law enforcement background? A family member who is a CPS technician?
- Have they supported child health bills in the past, and how have they voted on past child safety initiatives?

Once you have identified the right sponsors there should be a campaign to get more co-sponsors, preferably of both parties so that it is a bipartisan effort. Ask *your* local legislator to co-sponsor the bill, and ask your *allies* alongside your stakeholders to ask their local legislators. A bill with a large number of sponsors is valued for its strength.

8. Creating a Communications Strategy

A communications strategy is fundamental to convince legislators and the public of the need to legislate. The previous work that you have done will come in handy here. A good one-pager can easily be re-drafted into sample letters to the editor, press releases, blogs and op-ed articles. A story you found could appear in interviews on behalf of the legislation.

A solid advocacy media campaign should include outreach to traditional media—in search of free media—and on various social media platforms and video. There should also be op-ed articles and content specifically aimed to the “chattering class,” people in your community who influence public opinion. Some of the focus might be around a launch event. Elements of a successful press strategy are:

- **Sample Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds:** Create templates for letters to the editor so supporters can write to their local newspapers. It is boilerplate, broadly applicable language with holes in it for your localized information. Spreading the word this way is very effective and allows you to widen your reach.
- **Social Media:** Social media plays an important role in any campaign and many people increasingly get their news from social media. Knowing this, prepare sample posts and Tweets for supporters to send out. Keep them simple and to the point, and consider including a link or a picture. Figure out ways to reach your direct audience—most likely young parents--through social media channels most popular with them.
- **Sample Tweets**
 - WI child passenger safety bill A400 requiring rear-facing car seats until age 2 passes Assembly. Thanks @RepAmy31 <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/proposals/ab400>
 - Wisconsin child passenger safety bill A400 passes Assembly and moves to Senate: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/proposals/ab400>
- **Legislators and Social Media:** Remember that social media plays an important part in reaching out to legislators as well. Legislative offices track which posts they are tagged in and what comments are made about them. If a legislator introduces your CPS bill, or if they sign on as a co-sponsor, remember to thank them. Do the same when your legislation passes.

Section 3: Research and Resources

AAP Child Passenger Safety Recommendations

In 2018, the American Academy of Pediatrics updated its best practice recommendations on child passenger safety, summarizing the evidence supporting them in a new [technical report](#). The AAP also released an updated CPS [policy statement](#), making evidence-based recommendations (listed above) for CPS laws and policies covering children from birth through adolescence.

Why and How Stronger CPS Laws Work

Laws are among the most effective ways to save lives. After New York state upgraded its child passenger safety law in 2005, children ages 4 to 6 experienced an 18 percent reduction in traffic injury rate, while the injury rate for children 0 to 3 years of age (who were not affected) hardly changed at all. Overall, use of car seats and boosters increased by 72 percent and led to a decrease in fatalities.¹¹ A broader 2012 study of five states that passed booster seat laws found that booster seat laws were associated with a 5 percent reduction in the per capita rate of children injured in a car accident, and a 17 percent reduction in the per capita rate of children who sustained fatal or incapacitating injuries.¹²

The passage of new laws can help spur behavior change by educating families and shifting social norms, because many parents look to the law for guidance on how to protect their kids. In a survey of Michigan parents, 70 percent of respondents said they used booster seats because they thought it was the law, and 60 percent of booster seat users would be more likely to use a booster seat if it were required by law. More than 90 percent of those who did not use booster seats all of the time stated that they would use booster seats if they were required by law.¹³

In 2005, New York State upgraded its child passenger safety law. As a result, Children ages 4 to 6 experienced an 18 percent reduction in traffic injury rate after the law's implementation, while the injury rate for children 0 to 3 years of age, who were not affected, hardly changed at all. Overall, use of car seats and boosters increased by 72 percent and led to a decrease in fatalities.¹⁴

Data Sources and Other Resources:

To learn more about car seat safety and best practices to keep your child safe, you can access more information at the following websites:

- [NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System \(FARS\)](#)
- [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#)
- [Healthy Children](#)
- [NHTSA: Car Seat Use By State](#)
- Safe Kids November 2015 [webinar](#) on CPS laws ([PowerPoint slides](#))
- [Safe Kids AdvoKit on Tax Free Car Seats.](#)
- [Safe Kids AdvoKit on CPS Technician Immunity.](#)
- [CDC Child Passenger Safety Page](#)
- Governors Highway Safety Association page on [CPS laws.](#)
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety page on [CPS laws.](#)
- [CDC Child Passenger Safety Factsheet](#)
- [Safe Kids Worldwide Tips on Car Seats](#)
- [NHTSA Child Car Seat Recommendations](#)
- [NHTSA SaferCar Car Seat Registration](#)

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Appendix 1: South Carolina One-Pager

Issue Brief

South Carolina Child Passenger Safety



Introduction

Child passenger restraint systems are designed to reduce the risk of injury or death for a child in the event of a motor vehicle accident. These systems include various types of seats, including rear-facing, convertible, forward-facing and booster. Safety belts are also employed to reduce risk. All car seats sold within the United States must meet the federal child restraint safety standards set from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Although the NHTSA sets standards for child restraint safety, no federal child passenger safety laws exist. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands require child safety seats for infants and children fitting specific criteria. In 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico booster seats or other appropriate devices are required for children who have outgrown their child safety seats and who are still too small to safely use an adult safety belt.

South Carolina Regulations

South Carolina child passenger restraint system regulations are listed within Section 56-6-6410 of the state Code of Laws and apply to all motor vehicles equipped with safety belts.

CURRENT S.C. LAW REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED S.C. POLICY UPDATES
Rear-facing child seats for children 1 year old and younger	Rear-facing child seats for children 2 and younger
Forward-facing child seats, booster seats, or adult seat belts for children 1-6 years old, depending on the weight of the child	Forward-facing child seats or booster seats for children 1-8 years old until weight/height limits of the seat are met Adult seat belts for children older than 8 years and at least 4'9" tall
Children 6 years and older may ride in a front passenger seat	Children 8 years and older may ride in a front passenger seat

Best Practice

Child passenger restraint system guidelines of the NHTSA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are informed by the evidence-based recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) regarding child passenger safety. The AAP notes that every transition from one type of child passenger restraint to the next is associated with some decrease in protection, and thus encourages the delaying of transitions for as long as possible. AAP recommends the following legislation to best protect children:

Rear-facing Child Seats
Ages 2 and younger

Forward-facing Child Seats
Age 1-8 years until weight/height limits of the seat are met

Booster Seats
Ages 1-8 years until weight/height limits of the seat are met

Adult Seat Belts
Older than 8 years old and at least 4'9" tall

Front Passenger Seat
Older than 13 years old

Child Passenger Safety Prevalence in South Carolina

Conducted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Division of Injury and Violence Prevention (DHEC DIVP), child passenger safety audits took place at 23 elementary schools in South Carolina. The results show:

49%

of child passengers not properly restrained leaving student pick-up lines

33.5%

of child passengers left school property completely unrestrained

Appendix 2: Michigan One-Pager

HB 5559—Child Passenger Safety Laws in Michigan Should Align with National Guidelines

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommend children use a rear-facing car seat as long as possible followed by a forward-facing car seat until the child reaches the weight or height limits of their car seat. After outgrowing their car seat, children should use a booster seat until an adult seat belt fits properly, expected at a height of 57 inches.¹

Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death among children older than 4 years and the second leading cause of death among children 1 to 4 years old in the U.S. Each year more than 70,000 child passengers, ranging from birth to 7 years old, and another 70,000 child passengers, 8 to 12 years old, are treated in U.S. emergency departments after a crash. More than 100 Michigan children younger than 8 years old die each year in a crash.²

Child safety seats, including car seats and booster seats, are proven effective in reducing injuries and deaths in crashes. **Child safety seat use is suboptimal.** Suboptimal child safety seat use contributes to preventable childhood injuries and deaths.

Parents look to state laws to guide their selection of child passenger restraints.

Booster seat use falls off dramatically at age 8, this is the same age cited in the current child passenger laws of 30 states.



HB 5559: Michigan child passenger safety laws should be updated to better align with national guidelines and to move “Toward Zero Deaths” for Michigan child passengers.

- Rear-facing car seat use until age 2 or 30 pounds
- Forward-facing car seat use until age 5 or 50 pounds
- Booster seat use until age 10 or 57 inches



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¹ American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines for Child Passenger Safety – Policy Statement, *Pediatrics* April 2011.

² Crash statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

³ Figure from the child safety campaign from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration available at www.safercar.gov

Appendix 3: Stories

Three-year-old Survives Rollover Crash

Four Weeks After CPS Technicians Instructed Mom on Proper Car Seat Installation

Portland, Maine—On the morning of January 15, 2016, Andrea Goodwin and her 3 year-old daughter were traveling on I-295. All of a sudden another driver shifted into the same lane near Tuckey's Bridge and forced the mother into the guardrail, causing the car to overturn. The child was snugly secured in her car seat in the rear seat behind the mom and sustained slight injuries, while the mother sprained her wrist and received some bruises.

How did this potentially tragic crash become a good news story? Just four weeks earlier, the family attended a Safe Kids Maine car seat inspection station. The car seat was recalled because of a defect in the buckle; specifically it would get stuck after food and drinks leaked onto it. The technician at the event helped to correct the defect on the car seat by attaching the replacement buckle. In January 2016, Safe Kids Maine presented the family with a new car seat.

Immediately following the crash, mother Andrea Goodwin recalled her thoughts when she was sideways in the vehicle following the crash:

“Smelling burnt airbag powder and hearing my daughter’s cries in the background, all I could think is whether this was the end of our short life together. Then I remembered how just 4 weeks before I had attended a car seat safety check, where the wonderful volunteers replaced a recalled buckle on my daughter’s car seat, and properly installed her seat from rear facing to forward facing.) There is no doubt that this saved my daughter’s life and left her with only a few bruises.

“I will forever be grateful for these volunteers who took the time to properly install my daughter’s car seat. If it was not for me attending this car seat check a few weeks earlier, my daughter might not have survived. I wish that all parents would take the 20 minutes to stop by one of these car seat checks and ensure their car seats are properly installed.”



The crash scene.



Later, Safe Kids Maine presented Mom and child with a new car seat. From left, aunt Crystal Goodwin, niece Janiah, grandmother Susan Goodwin, and Janiah's Mom Andrea Goodwin. At right is Suzanne Grace, Safe Kids Maine coordinator.

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Appendix 3: Stories (Continued)

Wisconsin: Mom Credits Car Seat Installation Check for Saving Child's Life (Link)

In June of 2014, Bethany Olson and her two children survived a severe crash in Baldwin, Wisconsin after colliding with a cattle trailer. Two-year old Gunner was released from the hospital the same day, while 14-month old Emmajean was treated for a traumatic brain injury and has now fully recovered. Two weeks before the crash, Olson had attended a car seat check-up event at the Baldwin Area Medical Center to make sure the seats were installed in the car properly. She had the car seats set in a rear-sitting position at the time of the crash. Mrs. Olson told KARE television that she credits the car seat placement for saving the lives of her kids, saying "No child should die from their car seat being installed incorrectly, their car seat facing the wrong way, or not being restrained correctly with a harness."

Tennessee: After High-Speed Car Chase, 7-month-old Survives Crash; Mom Dies (Link)

In a black Cadillac Escalade SUV he stole from the parking lot of a funeral chapel, Garieon J. Simmons led Tennessee Highway Patrol on a high-speed pursuit for 30 miles. Ultimately, Simmons collided with the car driven by 28-year-old Jessica Simmons who was pulling her car out of the parking lot on South Church Street in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Simmons hit the driver's side, veering the car off the road. Ms. Campos died in the crash, but her 7-month daughter survived. Sgt. Travis Plotzer said the infant survived because she was properly restrained in a car seat. "Obviously, car seats make a difference. We want people to adhere to state law and best practices that keep kids safe in the car too," said Travis Plotzer with Tennessee Highway Patrol.

Alabama: Two-Year-Old Child Dies in Car Crash Driven by Her Aunt's Boyfriend (Link)

A 2-year-old was killed on Lauderdale County Road 7 in Lauderdale, Alabama when the car she was in flipped over, partially ejecting her. The car was operated by the boyfriend of the toddler's aunt, who was driving intoxicated. Addie Whittaker was not restrained in a car seat when the crash occurred. The child's mother believes that Addie would have been alive today if she was restrained in a car seat. Nearing the one-year anniversary of her daughter's death, Hannah Whittaker is advocating for car seat safety, making sure that kids are safe while they are on the road. "It does save children's lives. There's a reason there's a law. There's a reason why car seats are in place." Hannah Whitaker said. Another message from the Addie Whittaker story is that parents and caregivers need to buckle up kids in car seats every time. "It was literally a mile down the road and it killed her so just a mile down the road you never know what's going to happen," she said.

Appendix 4: “Christmas Tree” Ideas

These are some legislative ideas to add to a CPS bill. They are called “Christmas Tree” items because they are like ornaments on something everyone treasures.

Make Car Seats Tax Free

One element fostered by Safe Kids is the idea to make car seats tax-free. For example, when Florida passed its booster seat law—becoming the 49th state to pass one—the Governor forged a deal to make car seats and kids’ bike helmets tax-free. In addition to an Advokit to pass a tax-free car seat bill, we also have tips on the formula for drafting a “fiscal note” for your state to consider. This is a requirement in many states to give legislators an idea of the cost for a measure to the taxpayers.

Exempt Child Passenger Seat Technicians from Civil Liability

There are currently 38,000 CPS certified technicians helping families with their car seats in communities all over the country. Many of them do this as volunteers, but could be exposed to a nuisance lawsuit. Please consider adding a provision in your proposed law change that would provide immunity from civil liability for certified CPS technicians who practice within the scope of their specialty. Consider using the model language we have provided in [AdvoKit on CPS Technicians Immunity](#) to add in immunity provisions to your CPS law. Alaska, led by Safe Kids Alaska was the most recent state to pass such a law.

Additional Best Practice Additions to Your State Child Restraint Laws

In addition to the 2018 AAP guidelines, there are still other features of laws on child restraints for you to consider.

- Does the current seat belt law apply to all vehicle occupants?
- Are your state’s occupant protection laws subject to primary enforcement? Primary enforcement means that law enforcement can stop a vehicle solely because of an occupant protection violation. In other words, they do not need the pretext of another violation to stop a car. CPS laws in every state are primary. Secondary enforcement laws are much less effective. In Ohio, for example, the law is secondary for children ages four through 14.

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