

**CPS/VALENTINE'S PLANNER
SAMPLE OP-ED
514 WORDS**

**National Child Passenger Safety Week
Reminds Parents About the Importance of Booster Seats in Saving Lives**

Every year children suffer needless injury. Children ages 4 to 8 who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). According to NHTSA, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for every age 3 through 33.

A positive relationship between drivers using safety belts and children being restrained shows 92 percent of the children who were transported by belted drivers were restrained compared to only 62 percent of the children transported by unbelted drivers.

Too few children use booster seats. According to NHTSA estimates, only 10 percent to 20 percent of children ages 4 to 8 use booster seats.

That's why [**Local Leader/Organization**] is joining with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Ad Council and others around Valentine's Day this year to commemorate Child Passenger Safety Week (Feb. 12-18). The primary goal this year is to remind all parents and other adults responsible for children traveling in motor vehicles: if the kids are under 4'9" tall, they need to be in a booster seat.

It is of utmost importance that a child be properly restrained for their size and age.

As children grow, how they sit safely in a car, truck, van or SUV changes. For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the **4 Steps for Kids**:

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds;
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about age four and 40 pounds;
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight—unless the child is 4'9" or taller; and
4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4' 9".

It is imperative to remember all children under age 13 should ride in the back seat.

Many parents are under the false impression that children who have outgrown child safety seats can move right into regular safety belts, but nothing could be further from the

truth. So this year on Valentine's Day and during Child Passenger Safety Week, we are working hard to remind all parents, grandparents, and child care providers to use a booster seat to raise their kids to the right height in the car. If they're under 4'9" tall, put them in a booster seat.

Some parents or caregivers may regard booster seats as a hassle to use or a pain to convince their children to use. But protecting the ones you love means getting past the temporary complaints and perceived hassles. Use a booster seat because you love them.

For more information about Child Passenger Safety Week and the proper use of booster seats, visit www.boosterseat.gov.

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