

# Car seats make travel safer for the children we love

Is it sometimes difficult to get your child into his or her car seat? Or, has your child become a “little Houdini” and learned how to wiggle her arms out of the straps and even escape? We know that vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for small children, so we must assure that they are always in child safety seats and properly buckled up.

According to Manitoba Public Insurance, more than 70 children 12 and under are killed and more than 10,000 injured in car crashes in Canada every year. Seatbelts are designed to fit people 4 feet 9 inches or taller and approximately 80 pounds or more. The injuries are greater if children are moved to a seat belt too soon.

Consider these tips for travelling with children:

- Buckle up from the beginning. Children who ride in safety seats from the time they are born are more likely to accept them, as a natural part of riding in the vehicle. Set an example and point out to the child that you buckle up every time also. Always buckle up in every vehicle — even for a trip across the street or in your farm yard. Children learn best when parents are consistent.

- Appeal to a young child’s desire to please you. “Let’s buckle up, I love you and need you safe.” Ask each person by name if they are buckled up before starting the car.

**Lori McMechan**

## PARENTING POINTS

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- Point out interesting things to each other as you pass them. Play games, looking for special objects, sights, and colours.

- Bring fun things for your child to do in the car. Include some favourite music, books, or a few toys your child can only play with while riding in the car.

- Pull to the side of the road and stop if your child tries to get out of the car seat while you are driving. Explain he must buckle up to go with you. Calmly buckle your child back in their safety seat. Do this consistently so that your child learns neither of you will travel unbuckled.

It is important to make sure that the seat is the right size for your child’s height and weight. It is also crucial that the seat be properly installed in your vehicle. Manitoba Public Insurance has all the information you need on their website: [mpi.mb.ca](http://mpi.mb.ca). They have an excellent brochure

available to download called “Child Car Seats: Securing Your Precious Cargo.”

In Brandon, car seat inspections are offered through the Brandon fire department. If you live outside Brandon, contact Manitoba Public Insurance to find a child restraint technician in your area.

Summer is a time for seeking out bargains at garage sales.

However, car safety seats found at garage sales or thrift shops should not be purchased. Before borrowing a car seat consider the following guidelines:

- When the history of the seat is unknown, do not use it.

- Determine if the seat in question has been subject to a recall, or if recalled, the necessary repair work has been completed correctly. You can check Transport Canada’s website at [tc.gc.ca](http://tc.gc.ca) to find if a seat has been recalled.

- Make sure the car seat meets the Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Check for the National Safety Mark. There is a picture of this mark in the brochure available from Manitoba Public Insurance.

- Check the expiry date stamped in the plastic on the back of the seat. Most seats are stamped. If you cannot find a stamped date, contact the seat manufacturer.

- Make sure all parts are

present and in good condition, such as harness straps, locking clips, padding, shield, tether straps and bolts.

- If the car safety seat has been involved in an accident, even a minor one — DO NOT USE IT!

Sometimes getting children to be happy in their car seats seems impossible. As a parent, however, no amount of crying and screaming should keep you from using a safety seat.

Besides being the law, you

are buckling your children up for their own safety should an accident happen.

» Resource: “Child Car Seats: Securing Your Precious Cargo.” Manitoba Public Insurance.