



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

INFORMATIONAL MEMO

DATE: March 11, 2016

TO: Regional Managing Directors
Community-Based Care CEOs

THROUGH: Janice Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *JT*

FROM: Traci Leavine, Director of Child Welfare Practice *TL*

SUBJECT: Use of Child Restraint Seats When Transporting Children

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information concerning the proper use of car seats for children transported by the Department of Children and Families and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies or their subcontracted case management organizations. Staff must follow Florida Statutes while transporting children. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics provides guidance on best practices for the safe transportation of children and can be a valuable resource.

BACKGROUND: In recent years, Florida has seen changes to the state's laws regarding requirements for the use of car seats. Currently section 316.613, Florida Statutes, requires the following:

- Children 5 years of age and younger must be safely secured by the proper use of a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.
- Children birth through 3 years of age must be secured in a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat.
- Children 4 through 5 years of age must be secured in a separate carrier, an integrated child seat, or a child booster seat.

Though advisory in nature, the American Academy of Pediatrics' car seat safety recommendations are listed below:

- Infants and toddlers should ride rear-facing until they are at least 2 years old.
- Young children should ride in car safety seats with a harness until at least age 4, including recommendations for children to ride in a seat with a 5-point harness up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer.
- School-aged children should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until at least age 8 or until the seat belt fits correctly.
- Children should ride in the rear seat until age 13.

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has an excellent resource page on its website for child and motor vehicle safety, which provides instruction on many child car seat safety-related areas as well as best practice guidelines, and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.flhsmv.gov/safety-center/vehicle-and-child-safety/child-safety/>.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration hosts a website that provides instruction on many child car seat safety-related areas, including choosing car seats and proper installation, as well as best practice guidelines. The website can be found at the following link:

<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats/Right-Car-Seat-Age-Size.htm>.

Assistance and training on the proper installation of child safety seats is provided at many county health departments and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The links below provide locations for those certified to inspect for the proper installation of child safety seats and to provide instruction on proper installation:

- <http://www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/cps/index.htm>
- <http://cert.safekids.org/>.

ACTION NEEDED: Please distribute this Informational Memo to both child protective investigators and Community-Based Care Lead Agency staff. Staff are responsible for ensuring the safety of children while transporting them and must follow all state laws regarding the transportation of children.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Should you have questions about this communication, please contact Amy Hand, Office of Child Welfare, at 850-717-4491, or via e-mail at amy.hand@myflfamilies.com.

cc: David L. Fairbanks, Deputy Secretary
Vicki Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Operations