

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), car crashes the leading cause of death for children four years and older in the United States.

A properly installed, age appropriate car seat is the best protection you can give your child when traveling by car; having a child in the correct car seat can reduce the risk of fatal injury to infants by 71% and to toddlers by 54%.

The AAP has now released [new car seat guidelines](#). Instead of children being in rear-facing seats until age two, the AAP is now recommending that children stay in rear-facing seats as long as possible, until they reach the weight or height limit, according the car seat's manufacturer.

Ginger Streitmatter is a Child Passenger Safety Technician with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois. She says the new guidelines take a child's height and weight into account because every child develops at a different pace.

\*\*\*SOT\*\*\*

Ginger Streitmatter, Child Passenger Safety Technician, OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois  
"What if you're not tall enough? There are all of those things that you have to take into account, so I think they took the age away just to start looking at where they are developmentally." (:12)

However, even if you have the right seat for your child, it needs to be properly installed. Hundreds of thousands of kids are riding around every day in improperly installed car seats. According to Streitmatter, across the nation it's about 73%, locally it's as high as 90%.

The best way to protect kids in the car is to put them in the right seat and use it the right way. Streitmatter encourages everyone to start by reading the car seat manufacturer's instructions as well as your vehicle owner's manual on how to install the seat.

\*\*\*SOT\*\*\*

Ginger Streitmatter, Child Passenger Safety Technician, OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois  
"It doesn't matter if a seat is \$40 or \$400. If a seat's not put in correctly, it's not going to save your child." (:05)

Streitmatter participates in free car seat safety checks across the community. Wednesday she was with a team at the East Peoria Fire Department. The Fire Department has a child safety seat inspection program that provides a safety check - free of charge.

East Peoria Firefighter Dan Bourscheidt says investing 20 minutes on a car seat check could truly save a life.

\*\*\*SOT\*\*\*

Dan Bourscheidt, East Peoria Firefighter

"It does just take a split second, or one bad decision by one person or another to be in some sort of situation. We want to make sure that our kids are safe, and by just spending that 20 or 30 minutes to learn those things for our children keeps them safe." (:16)

Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois are available to answer questions and provide education and instruction on car seat usage and installation.

Additionally, the team conducts multiple free car seat safety checks in the community every month. Check the OSF Children's Hospital website for a [schedule of events](#).

More information on proper car seat safety and installation can be found at [www.SafeKids.org](http://www.SafeKids.org) and [www.SaferCar.gov/parents](http://www.SaferCar.gov/parents).