

Program Overview

“If I only knew”

The words of an anguished mother who lost her young child in a car crash haunt us, but also inspire us each day as we work to help make sure that every person is safe on the road.

The Facts

While cars and trucks today are safer than ever, studies show that motor vehicle crashes remain one of the leading causes of death for children in the United States. Research analyzed by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center – a national leader in pediatric and adolescent medicine – shows that three out of four child car seats are installed incorrectly. Other research shows that, for various reasons, Hispanic and African American children are 10 times less likely to be properly restrained in a vehicle.

Adding to the tragedy of these statistics is the fact that many of these injuries and deaths are avoidable with the use of proper restraints like child car seats, booster seats, and seat belts.

The Program

That’s why, in 2004, Cincinnati Children’s and Toyota teamed up to create Buckle Up for Life. Buckle Up for Life is a national program that educates the entire family on critical safety behaviors and provides free child car seats to families in need. Buckle Up for Life is most effective when we work in close collaboration with local children’s hospitals and community organizations. It is the only national program of its kind.

We have educated more than 17,000 people in the last 10 years and Toyota has provided funding for 40,000 car seats for families in need.

Our Approach

Over a six-week period, Buckle Up for Life’s experts work closely with participants of all ages – parents, caregivers and children alike – to deliver critical, interactive information in ways that resonate personally.

The Components

- Presentations for adults
- Presentations for teens
- Lessons for children
- Free car seats & installation instructions

Our Partners

Buckle Up for Life began as a collaboration between Cincinnati Children’s and Toyota, and has expanded to include partnerships with many distinguished children’s hospitals across the U.S:

- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
- Boston Children’s Hospital
- Children’s Hospital Los Angeles
- C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Children’s Hospital of Nevada at UMC (Las Vegas)
- Cohen Children’s Medical Center (New York)
- Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital (Memphis)
- Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital—Stanford (Palo Alto, CA)
- Maynard Children’s Hospital at Vidant Medical Center (Greenville, NC)
- Phoenix Children’s Hospital
- Texas Children’s Hospital (Houston)
- The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
- University Health System (San Antonio)
- Yale-New Haven Hospital (New Haven, CT)



Our Results

Over 10 years, community organizations that have offered Buckle Up for Life have observed a marked improvement in auto safety behaviors.

The rate of children in car seats **increased from almost one in three to one in two**

The rate of children riding unrestrained in cars **decreased from one in four to less than one in ten**

A **15% increase** in use of seat belts for adults, from 71 percent to 86 percent