



GTIPI

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Tech Talk

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Saved by the Belt

Submitted by Scott Riddle, CPST-I, Smyrna Fire Department, and Sandra Habach, Cobb County Parent

Sandra's Story

In April 2006, I went to Smyrna Fire Station 1 for a child safety seat check. I did not imagine that 5 months later we would be in a car crash on I-285.

I was six months pregnant on September 14, 2006, when I went to the airport to pick up my sister-in-law. My 14-month-old, Sara, was riding with me.

On our way back from the airport on I-285 North, I ran over a piece of metal in the middle of the expressway. I noticed we had a flat tire, and I was immediately able to stop the car in the left emergency lane. I stepped out of the car and confirmed that our back tire on the passenger side was flat. When I came back to the car to call 911, I heard a big noise. My worst fears were true. Somebody hit our car from the back.

Some minutes later I woke up and my first thought was Sara. I looked back and saw the car totally destroyed. I looked at Sara's side, and she was there, crying. She was very upset but looked intact, sitting in her car seat. I passed her through the window to a stranger standing next to our car. There were many people around our car with terrified looks. Then I checked my sister-in-law.



Sandra Habach's Chevrolet Cavalier

She was unconscious, but I yelled to her and finally she woke up. She was wearing her seatbelt and she was OK. I left the car, passing through the windshield and walking on the hood.

Sara was OK. She did not have any serious injury. God acts in very special ways to show His grace. I know He saved our lives that day, especially Sara's. God also put in our lives a very special firefighter, Hunter Schumaker, who helped us with our baby's seat months before the car crash.

I will be eternally thankful for what our firefighters do everyday in our community. Hunter, we are very proud of you, especially Sara. Now we know more than ever that a well-installed car seat can save a baby's life.

Scott's Story

Some days, it seems we just go through the motions educating parents about child passenger safety. Although they thank us for our time, somehow it all seems routine. In November 2007, that changed for me. A young lady named Sandra Habach entered our fire station, and I assumed she was there for an Inspection Station appointment. She told me she was looking for the person

that had inspected her child safety seat the previous year. She became quite emotional, and it was obvious she was on a mission. She explained that she had been involved in a serious crash on I-285 in which her car was totaled but her young daughter Sara escaped without injury.

From our department photographs, we were able to tell that Firefighter Hunter Schumaker had assisted with Sara's child safety seat. Hunter has since moved to the Cobb County Fire Department, but he volunteered to come by and meet the family. When Hunter walked in, Mrs. Habach burst into tears. She enthusiastically thanked Hunter, hugged his neck, and re-introduced him to Sara.

It took a few minutes to sink in, but it became quite apparent that Hunter was responsible for saving Sara's life or, at the very least, preventing Sara from serious injury. The Habachs and Hunter have forged a friendship for life, and I am sure not a day passes that they don't think about him. As firefighters, we are trained in many ways to save lives, and I will never again overlook the fact that it may be as simple as spending 30 minutes educating a parent.



Sandra Habach (Sara's mother),
Hunter Schumaker (firefighter/CPST),
& Sara Habach (saved by her child
safety seat at 14 months old)

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Q & A for CPSTs

Beth Bartlett, CPST Instructor

QYou're educating the family of 22-pound, 11-month-old boy.

One label on his convertible seat says: "Use only in a rear-facing position when using it with an infant weighing less than 20 lbs." However, above that label is another that reads "Rear-facing 5-35 lbs."

Is this a mistake? Which label should you go by?

AFirst, let's talk about what NOT to do in this situation.

1. Don't turn him forward-facing.

Remember, a child should be at least 1 year old and at least 20 pounds before even considering forward-facing. Ideally, he should remain rear-facing as long as possible.

2. Don't jump to the conclusion that he needs another child safety seat.

As you noticed, one label says 5 to 35 pounds, and he is within that weight range.

3. Don't assume it's an error.

Labeling errors do happen, so check a recall list. In this case, though, there's another answer.

These labels don't really conflict with each other, even though one says "less than 20" and the other "5-35." It all comes down to careful reading. A hurried look at the first label might lead you to think (mistakenly) that the rear-facing weight *limit* is 20 pounds.

However, what "Use *only in a rear-facing position* when using it with an infant weighing less than 20 lbs." actually means is to *keep* any child who is 20 pounds or lighter rear-facing, which is just part of the minimum-1-year-and-20-pounds rule. According to an engineer at Evenflo, it is worded this way to meet a very specific federal regulation.

Look at the way the instruction booklet describes it (pictured at right). For this seat, between 20 and 35 pounds, you have a choice – it can be used rear-facing or forward-facing, depending on

Rear-facing ONLY

- 5 – 20 lbs (2.3 – 9 kg)
- AND**
- At least 19" (48 cm).
- AND**
- Top of head is at least 1 inch (25 mm) below the top of the child restraint seat back.
- AND**
- Less than one year of age.

Rear- OR Forward-facing

- 20 – 35 lbs (9 – 15.8 kg)
- AND**
- At least one year of age.

Forward-facing ONLY

- 35 – 50 lbs (15.8 – 22.6 kg)
- AND**
- Less than 47" (119 cm).
- AND**
- At least one year of age.

2007 Evenflo Titan instructions, p. 1

what's appropriate for the child. In this case, since the child is 11 months old, he can use this seat rear-facing until 35 pounds, probably long after his first birthday.

New Graco Nautilus: 65-lb Harness

Mary Ann Robinson, CPST Instructor

The Graco Nautilus is a new forward-facing combination seat that transforms into three different modes and can potentially fit children from ages 1 through 10. The internal harness can be



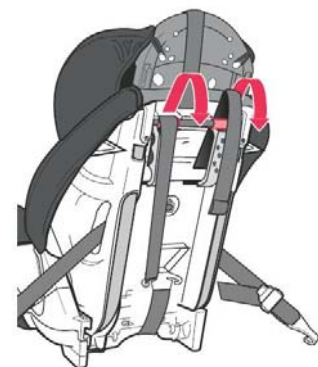
Graco Nautilus
Photo from gracobaby.com

used from 20 to 65 pounds. The seat converts to either a high-back booster for children 30 to 100 pounds or a backless booster from 40 to 100 pounds. The Nautilus includes a steel-reinforced structure, 3-position recline, head support height adjustment, and EPS Energy Absorbing Liner features. It retails for approximately \$150.

This child safety seat is currently the only one on the market rated to 65 pounds with internal harnesses that can also convert to a backless booster for longer use. Its instructions state that the child safety seat must not hang over the edge of the vehicle seat. Also, the instructions specify that the seat belt (not LATCH) must be used for installations with children weighing more than 48 pounds. Remember to also consult the vehicle owner's manual to confirm any

weight limits on the vehicle's LATCH system.

Visit www.gracobaby.com for more information.



Inspecting this seat?

Make sure the harness straps go over the red rollers in the back.
from Graco Nautilus instructions, p. 30

DISCLAIMER: Trade and brand names are used only for information, and descriptions are those of the manufacturers. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences and College of Family & Consumer Sciences, does not guarantee nor warrant published standards on any product mentioned, neither does the use of a trade or brand name imply approval of any product to the exclusion of others which may also be suitable.

CPST Training, Then and Now: The Pinch Test

Melba King, CPST Instructor

What is one of the most common misuses with child safety seats? If you were to ask CPSTs, one answer would definitely be harnesses that are too loose. But how do you explain to parents and caregivers just how snug they should be? Although previous trainings taught us to use the one or two finger test, that is no longer correct.

According to the 2007 National Child Passenger Safety Certification Training student manual, a snug harness strap “should not allow any slack. It lies in a relatively straight line without sagging” (p. 127). When properly placed,

you should not be able to pinch any excess in the harness webbing at the child’s shoulders once the harness is buckled.

The retainer clip must then be placed at armpit level to hold the harnesses in the correct position. Remember that the harnesses prevent ejection from the child safety seat, so properly testing for a snug fit is an essential step in securing the child. Teach parents and caregivers who transport children to do the “pinch test” before every trip.



Melba King’s granddaughter, Emma, may be young, but she already knows when her harnesses are too loose!

To learn more about the latest best practices, view and print the updated NCPST student manual at www.cpsboard.org/techmanual_downloads.htm



New NHTSA Ratings for Child Safety Seats

Beth Bartlett, CPST Instructor

When a parent or caregiver asks which child safety seat is the “best” one, our answer is still the same. Rather than a particular brand or model, the best child safety seat depends on the individual situation. It should be the seat that fits the child, fits the vehicle, and that they can use correctly every time. A new ease of use rating system might help some parents or caregivers make those decisions.

On January 30, NHTSA replaced its previous ease of use rating system for child safety seats. Every seat is rated in four categories – labels, instructions, securing the child, and vehicle installation

features – and given an overall rating. Each rating can range from one star (“poor”) to five stars (“excellent”). More information about the new rating system and the ratings for every child safety seat on the market are available on NHTSA’s Web site. (Go to nhtsa.gov and click the Child Seat “Ease of Use” Ratings on the left side of the page.)

Practical Tips for CPSTs

- ◆ NHTSA’s five-star ratings for child safety seats are NOT safety ratings (unlike the five-star crash ratings for vehicles.). Emphasize to parents and caregivers that all child safety seats

on the market have met Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

- ◆ In the rating system, seats are not divided into the same four categories you learned in your CPST training. Convertible seats are rated in both their rear-facing and forward-facing positions, and combination seats are also listed under the “convertible seat” category.
- ◆ Remember that these ratings might help some caregivers decide about selecting a seat, but remind them to choose a seat according to their own child’s needs and vehicle.

Resources at GTIPI for Community Education

Melba King & Beth Bartlett, CPST Instructors

GTIPI has recently updated a variety of PowerPoint presentations based on the National CPS Training Program curriculum. These presentations are available to CPSTs at no cost. Each includes speaker’s notes that can assist with your first presentations. Some of these presentations are tailored for specific audiences such as law enforcement or medical professionals, and some are appropriate for the general public. Remember, teaching

four hours of community education is one of the ways you can meet your CPST re-certification requirements. Contact Melba King at mking@uga.edu for an order form.

Free brochures from GTIPI and the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety are also available on topics such as booster seats and Georgia’s child safety seat law. You can order these resources online at www.ridesafegeorgia.org



You can use GTIPI’s updated booster seat card to provide information in English and Spanish.

GTIPI Training Dates

CPST 4-Day Training

April 8-11	Conyers
May 6-9	Conyers
May 13, 14, 20, & 21	Augusta
June 10-13	Vidalia

CPST CEU Workshop

April 24	Rome
June 26	Athens

P.R.I.D.E. Instructor Certification

April 8	Perry
April 22	Conyers
May 13	Conyers
May 20	Americus
June 10	Barnesville
June 24	Valdosta

P.R.I.D.E. Instructor Re-certification

April 9	Perry
April 23	Conyers
May 14	Conyers
May 21	Americus
June 11	Barnesville
June 25	Valdosta

CarFit Event Coordinator

April 28-29	Conyers
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Video Option for CEUs

If travel money and time are tight, consider watching a CPS video for CEUs. Here's what to do:

1. Select a video with technical content about CPS. Ask for pre-approval if you're in doubt about whether the content counts.
2. Find one or more CPSTs to watch with you.
3. Make an agenda with the date, time, and main items of business — such as “watch video” and “discuss video.”
4. Send around a sign-in sheet. Your copy of the sign-in sheet with your name circled is your proof of attendance.
5. Watch the video and learn!

Need a video? Click [here](#) for a 60-minute video of a webinar from December 4, 2007, about the results of a recent LATCH study. (E-mail bbartlet@uga.edu if you have a printed copy of *Tech Talk*.)

For details about all CPST re-certification requirements (including CEUs), visit www.safekids.org/certification



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***In 9 days in January 2008, 3 unrestrained 3-year-olds died in separate crashes in Georgia.
In comparison, 5 unrestrained children under age 6 died in crashes during all of 2006.***

Source: Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety