

BETter Living ...

Bernadette Trieb

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent

September 28, 2017

Strap in for Safety

Did you know that falls are the number one leading cause of non-fatal injuries for children 0 to 19? Every day, approximately 8,000 children are treated in U.S. emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. September is Baby Safety Month.

The best way to prevent injury is direct supervision by watching, listening and staying near your child. Child safety devices, like safety belts and straps, should always be used when available. Straps and safety belts on baby gear reduce the risk of infant fall injuries.

On the Go:

- All strollers come fitted with standard safety harness straps.
- Use straps at all times, even if it's a short trip.
- Harness straps stop the child from climbing out of the seat and falling.
- Straps protect the child in case the stroller would tip over.
- Safety straps should be used regardless of the child's age.
- Many strollers feature a five-point harness system, which features straps that secure over each shoulder, at both sides of the waist, and in the middle of the legs.
- It is important to always use all straps, not just lap straps or shoulder straps alone.

In the Car:

- A snug strap should not allow any slack.
- It lies in a relatively straight line without sagging.
- It does not press on the child's flesh or push the child's body into an unnatural position.
- Chest clips should be positioned mid to upper chest area, near armpits.
- Shoulder straps fit snugly, can only fit 1 finger between harness and shoulder or use pinch test.
- **Lead by Example.** Make sure the whole family buckles up!

At Home:

- Babies should always be buckled into swings and bouncers.
- Both use either a three or five-point harness to keep baby as secure as possible.
- For swings, use a five-point harness whenever possible to keep baby from climbing or rolling out of the seat.
- Always buckle baby into the changing pad. If your changing tray is on top of a dresser, be sure they attach to each other securely.
- When changing, keep one hand on the child at all times, even when using safety straps and keep supplies within arm's reach.

Mealtime:

- Always use safety straps whenever your child sits in the high chair.
- Make sure the straps are well secured so that your child sits snugly and is not wriggling around in the chair.

- The crotch strap prevents your child from slipping down.
- Never allow your child to stand in the high chair.

Remember to strap your baby in!

More information can be found online at: www.babysafetymonth.org. You can also contact the Wabaunsee County Extension Office at 785-765-3821 or email Bernadette Trieb, btrieb@ksu.edu.