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# Sit Back-It's Elementary:

## A Traffic Safety Program to Save Young Lives

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### Key Messages Talking Points

#### WHO Should Buckle?

- **Everyone!** Each and every person should always buckle whenever they get into a vehicle! That doesn't just apply to kids, but also to adults, including moms, dads, grandparents, teachers, and other adults.
- Why everyone? A crash can happen at any time. Increase the safety of all passengers in the car by buckling up. Unbuckled people can injure those who are already wearing seat belts.
- Because children are smaller than adults, they need special seats that give them the same protection that a seat belt gives an adult. The seats change in size in shape as children get older.
- Wearing a seat belt is the law in Pennsylvania and all over the United States. That's because seat belts keep the people who wear them safe. A driver can get a ticket if anyone in the car is not buckled. In Pennsylvania, a driver can also get pulled over if a child under the age of 8 is not properly buckled into a car seat or booster seat. This is for your safety! Sometimes wearing a seat belt is not enough to protect you if you are not big enough.

#### WHEN Should You Buckle?

- **Every Time!** No one knows when a crash will happen. It's best to play it safe and buckle up.
- Morning, noon and night, you should always be buckled up. There's no time of day that's safe to go without a seat belt.
- It's important to buckle up every time, even when you are just driving down the street. Some people believe that crashes won't happen when they are close to home, but crashes can happen at any time.
- Before your car even starts moving, it's a good idea to look around to make sure everyone is wearing his or her seat belt or safety seat. If not, tell them to buckle up, and don't let the driver start driving until everyone has done so!

#### WHERE Should You Sit?

- **In the back!** If you are age 12 and under, the back seat is the safest place for you to be.
- Why? The back seat is just safer, plus the front seat probably has airbags. Airbags are designed to keep someone of adult size safe in a crash and can be unsafe for a child.
- Just because a child is big enough to wear an adult seat belt doesn't mean he's big enough for the front seat. The front seat is for teens and adults. Stay on the safe side and stay in the back if you are age 12 and under.
- Sometimes it's impossible for children to ride in the back seat – like in pickup trucks. Pickup trucks can be safe, but parents should turn off the airbags.

### WHAT Seat Is Right for You?

- **It depends on your age, weight and height.** Doctors and scientists are always working to keep safety a top priority for children riding in vehicles. They put a lot of work in to their recommendations to keep you safe, so you should follow their instructions.
- Everyone grows at a different pace. Two children with the exact same birthday might be in two different types of seats. It's not a race to the next type of car seat – it's about what will protect you the best.
- There are several types of car seats that work for elementary age children. The smallest children should ride in forward-facing seats with harnesses, larger children should use a booster seat, and no one should wear a seat belt until they fit into it properly. We'll talk more about that later.
- Did you know that less than half of children who should be in booster seats use them? Most children are ready for an adult seat belt between the ages of eight and 12, depending on weight and height.

### HOW Do Seat Belts Work?

- **By holding you in place.** Have you ever come to a quick stop in the car and something like a drink or toy has gone flying or fallen on the floor? That could be you without a seat belt, and it's not safe.
- It's always safer to be held in place during a crash rather than thrown around the vehicle or worse, thrown outside. A seat belt and safety seat makes it very unlikely you'll leave the car.
- Seat belts are more complicated than that. They are specially designed to work at just the right time to stop your movement and keep you from getting hurt, all at the same time.
- That's why it's so important to be in the right type of seat for your age, weight and height, that the seat is put in properly and that you are seated correctly. Otherwise the seat belt can't do its job.

### WHY Is It Important to Buckle Up?

- **Seat belts keep you safe.** Many people are injured and even killed in traffic crashes every year. It's a fact that being properly buckled up saves lives and reduces injuries. Most crashes aren't serious and hopefully, you will never be in one. Still, the best thing you can do to protect yourself and your friends and family is to make sure everyone buckles up.
- **Seat belts are the law in Pennsylvania.** Our law says that a driver whether it be a parent, relative, or friend's parent or relative will get pulled over and will receive a ticket if they are seen transporting a child who is not buckled up. Tickets are expensive and they can ruin an adult's day.
- **Buckling Up is Smart!** A long time ago, cars didn't have seat belts and lots of people got hurt when they crashed. Today, protecting yourself is as easy as a simple click. No one wants to get hurt, but a crash can happen to anyone at any time; play it safe, buckle up.