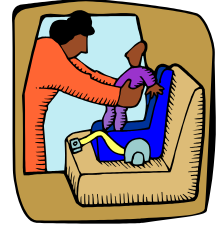


CHILD SAFETY SEAT PLANNING AND DISTRIBUTION GUIDE



This Guide is intended for Ride Safe Program Coordinators to use when planning and conducting Child Passenger Safety (CPS) program and distribution activities. This Guide will assist Ride Safe program coordinators in identifying practical issues to consider when laying the groundwork for their Ride Safe Program. All of the planning and preparation culminates in the distribution of the child safety seat to the parents and child-care providers of Head Start students. The goal of the distribution process is to provide parents and child-care provider's knowledge of the importance of child safety seats and basic CPS concepts, as well as confidence in their ability to install their safety seat and child in the family vehicle. While this is a lot of information to adsorb in a short period of time, it is achievable.

The Child Safety Seat Distribution process of Ride Safe consists of 5 phases:

1. Administrative Considerations
2. Child Safety Seat Education
3. Proper Fitting of Child Safety Seats
4. Hands on Skills Training
5. Follow-up (home visits)

The first 4 phases are Head Start-based, while the 5th requires conducting home visits. Most home visits are done as a follow-up activity. Follow-up home visits are crucial in reinforcing car seat usage with parents and also for Ride Safe Program evaluation.

Each of the five Child Safety Seat distribution process phases are described in the following pages of this Guide.

PHASE 1: Administrative Considerations

There are five important questions to answer prior to distributing car seats:

1. **WHO** should get the child safety seat(s)?
2. **HOW** should I plan for safety seat distribution?
3. **WHEN & WHERE** should the safety seats be distributed?
4. **HOW** should I track who receives child safety seat?
5. **WHAT** should I do after the child safety seat have been distributed?

1. WHO Should Get the Child Safety Seat(s)?

The Ride Safe Program provides one child safety seat per child. If your program has enough safety seats, it may be possible to provide a family with an additional car seat, but that should be done only after all other families in need have been served. In situations where a parent asks for multiple child safety seats (e.g., one for each vehicle the family owns) it will be necessary for the Coordinator to prioritize.

Ride Safe Coordinators can use a variety of criteria when deciding **WHO** should get child safety seats, including distributing them based on any combination of the following factors:

- *Families where children stay:* families selected to receive a child safety seat should be those where children receive childcare.
 - Example: If a child is being cared for by an Aunt or Uncle, then the Aunt or Uncle should be the recipient of the education, skills training and child safety seat.
- *Financial need:* families in greater financial need should receive priority in getting free Ride Safe child safety seat.
- *Parent meeting attendees:* families/parents must attend Ride Safe Program meetings/presentations (as described in the Staff & Childcare Provider's Training Guide) to receive child safety seat.

Plan ahead to have booster seats available for the children that will outgrow their convertible seat and need to move up to a booster seat.

When a child receives a Ride Safe child safety seat in the previous year, they may only receive another seat if they need to progress to the next larger type of seat (e.g., infant to convertible to booster). Some families may want a new child safety seat because the one they received previously from the Ride Safe Program is dirty or has not been maintained properly—even though the safety seat is still appropriate for the child. In this situation, this family would be a low priority for a child safety seat, or the Ride Safe Coordinator may decide to charge a reduced fee (\$20) for the child safety seat.

Ride Safe child safety seats are provided for American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start students. If a Head Start or community has non-Indian or non-Head Start students, they cannot be given Ride Safe child safety seats. It is recommended that other resources (such as Emergency Medical Services for Children, Boost America!, Safe Kids or individual State

Departments of Public Safety) be explored as potential sources of child safety seats. For ideas on how to get additional safety seats, please see your IHS Area IP Specialist.

These are just a few examples of how to decide who should get child safety seats. Coordinators are encouraged to think of other ideas and include them as appropriate during the development of your Child Safety Seat Distribution Plan.

2. HOW Should I Plan for Safety Seat Distribution?

Once you have the delivery date for your child safety seats, it's time to start planning their distribution. Consider the following issues before, during, and after you distribute seats:

Advertising:

Distribute information concerning parent education, skills training, and child safety seat distribution to the parents (see Sample Activity Letter to parents at the end of this Guide). This information can be placed in flyers that students take home, a Head Start newsletter, community newspaper, radio, etc.

It is important to let parents know that they need to bring with them their child and the car they use most often to transport the child. Preferably all persons that transport the child would be invited to the training.

Refer to the Sample Follow-Up Letter at the end of this Guide for an idea of how to advertise your distribution efforts.

Identifying Community Partners:

For the distribution of safety seats, you will need to contact and schedule your CPS certified Head Start staff and community CPS partners. The following should be present during child safety seat distribution:

- At least one NHTSA-certified CPS Technician.
- Ideally, a parent-to-staff ratio of 2:1. Keeping as close to the 2:1 ratio as possible will make the hands-on skills training and installations go smoother and faster.
- At a minimum, assistants need to be trained in at least a one- or two-day CPS course such as SNAP. Assistants should be familiar with the safety seats you will be distributing.

- Schedule to have support staff available to assist with activities. The following recommendations are provided to determine the number and roles of event attendants:
 - Individuals to assist with traffic control in the parking lot
 - An assistant to help with refreshments and snacks
 - Several staff to provide day care for the children

Transportation of Safety Seats & Supplies to the Distribution Site:

If the safety seats are stored away from where they will be distributed, the Coordinator will need to make arrangements to have the safety seats moved before distribution. Make sure to have on hand other needed equipment and supplies as described below.

Setting Up Center/Distribution Site for Education & Skills Training:

- **Childcare:** Have adequate childcare available at the center or distribution location. Keeping the children occupied during the parent education and skills training will maximize the parent's time and enhance their attention to the tasks at hand.
- **Room Arrangements:** Have adequate audiovisual equipment and supplies for training. Consider whether you need the following:
 - TV
 - VCR
 - Overhead Projector
 - Computer and image projector
 - Power/extension cords
 - Access to electrical outlet
 - Scale to weigh children
 - Ruler to measure height of children
 - Educational handouts
 - Videos (UTTC's *Car Seat Safety* or *Saving our Future*)
 - Discussion guides for videos

Have adequate seating and space to conduct the hands on skills training. If possible have adult furniture available!

Have a selection of child safety seats so the parents can practice their hands-on skills.

- **Other Supplies:**

Have adequate supplies to conduct the education and training activities. The following supplies are typically brought by the certified CPS

Technician:

- Scale
- Ruler

- ❑ Traffic cones (to help organize the parking lot for the hands-on skills training)
- ❑ Signs for the event
- ❑ Spare locking clips
- ❑ Belt shortening clips
- ❑ Swim noodles to help adjust rear facing child safety seat
- ❑ Use of a garage or covered area in the event of bad weather
- ❑ Snacks and beverages
- ❑ Videos and games for the children to play while the parents are in the CPS class and skills training.

Recalled, Used and Damaged Seats:

Have the most recent copy of the child safety seat recall list available at the site, in case a parent arrives with a safety seat that needs to be checked. Damaged safety seats and those over 6 years of age are potentially unreliable and should be replaced. Make arrangements to have recalled, damaged or old safety seats destroyed. Intact seats should not simply be placed in the trash; they need to be dismantled first (remove pads and cut belts). The Ride Safe Program does not wish to see these seats 'rescued' from the trash and reused in the community.

3. WHEN & WHERE Should the Child Safety Seat Be Distributed?

Deciding **WHEN & WHERE** to distribute child safety seats should take into consideration several factors, including: weather, community seasonal activities, time of day and staff availability. Choose a time of day/week that is most convenient for both the parent/childcare provider and the instructor(s). Ride Safe Coordinators could decide to distribute child safety seats in the following ways:

- During Head Start registration / health screenings
- During home visits: as part of a regular home visit conducted by Head Start staff/teachers; in conjunction with a visit for another reason; or setting up special appointments for home visits
- As part of a Head Start Parent Education Night
- As part of a formal child safety seat clinic or event
- During one-on-one appointments scheduled with parents/childcare providers and children.

Again, each Ride Safe Coordinator should use their best judgment when deciding when and where to distribute child safety seats. If CPS partners are involved with the Ride Safe safety seat distribution, the Coordinator will need to work with all parties to insure proposed distribution events will work with their schedules.

If Ride Safe Coordinators plan to distribute seats as part of parent night activities, they will need to determine whether to distribute child safety seats immediately following a parent meeting or at a different time. In order to provide safety seats to parents who receive education and skills training during a parent meeting, it is recommended that Head Start Centers hold a child safety seat distribution event in conjunction with a regularly scheduled parent meeting.

However, if there are time constraints and limited numbers of staff to check and install child safety seats, it may be necessary to schedule one or more child safety seat clinics at times other than when parent meetings are conducted and/or conduct individual follow-up appointments with parents and/or childcare providers. In the latter situation, it is helpful to have parents sign up for time slots during the scheduled distribution event.

Child safety seats can also be distributed during home visits. However, this is more time-consuming than distributing them during child safety seat clinics or parent meetings. Child safety seats can be distributed as part of routine home visits, by scheduling special appointments, or in conjunction with home visits for other reasons. Examples of this are home safety checks or installation of smoke alarms (reference Sleep Safe Program).

4. HOW Should I Track Who Receives a Child Safety Seat?

In order to keep track of who has received a child safety seat, Ride Safe Coordinators should use the Child Safety Seat Tracking Sheet provided in the *Forms/Data Guide*. A Ride Safe Tracking Sheet should be filled out for each family that receives a safety seat. Follow-up visit data will later be entered on the SAME Tracking Sheet after each family's follow-up visit is completed.

At the end of each reporting period, Ride Safe Coordinators will use the information collected on the Tracking Sheets to provide cumulative child safety seat distribution information in their progress reports (see *Forms/Data Guide*).

5. WHAT Should I Do After Child Safety Seats Are Distributed?

Conduct follow-up home visits at least 2 months after the initial car seat installation (see PHASE 5 for details).

PHASE 2: Child Safety Seat Education

Parents and childcare providers need to be provided basic child safety seat education. The objective should be to provide the parents with an appropriate amount of information that will inform them of the benefits to using a safety seat when transporting their child **during every trip**.

Previous Ride Safe Program Coordinators found it very useful that local Program Support Staff (i.e., Environmental Health Officers, Injury Prevention Specialists) assist with planning and conducting child safety seat educational activities. Also, certified Child Passenger Safety Seat Technicians are a good resource to provide assistance with planning and conducting educational activities found in this and other Ride Safe Training Module Guides.

Note: If the education component is done in conjunction with a distribution activity or event, it should be scheduled so the distribution event doesn't go beyond two hours. Devote the majority of time to hands-on skills training.

PHASE 3: Proper Fitting of Child Safety Seats

Coordinators will need to defer to the child safety seat manufacturer's recommended height and weight recommendations, and provide this information to the parents when safety seats are distributed.

Along with the physical aspects of the child (height and weight), the parents/childcare providers will need to consider the vehicle (seats and belt systems) and how well the child safety seat will work with them. Some safety seats will be incompatible with the vehicles seats due to seatback height or seatbelt system design issues. These factors need to be discussed with parents, so that they realize that not all vehicles are capable of using every type of child safety seat.

Generally, Head Start children (3 to 5 years of age) range in weight from 25 to 80+ pounds. Due to the wide range of potential sizes, the Ride Safe Program will have to use several different types of child safety seats (convertible seats, combination and booster seats). While participating in Head Start, the child may need to switch to a different child safety seat due to growth or the use of a different vehicle by the parents. Examples of this situation are provided below.

Example 1: Sally was originally fitted for a low back booster seat. The low back booster fit her height and weight needs and it was a good fit for her mother's car (high seat backs and a lap shoulder belt). During the follow-up visit by the Head Start Home Visitor, it was discovered that Sally's parents had recently purchased a new van. The rear seats of the van, where Sally usually sat, were low and provided no support for Sally's head. **In this instance, the home visitor recommended that Sally's parents switch to a high back booster.**

Example 2: Scott was originally fitted for a convertible safety seat since he weighed 25 pounds at the start of school and his mother wanted him to be in a rear facing safety seat. At the time of the follow-up visit; Scott had put on an additional 09 pounds and several inches. **In this instance, the home visitor recommended that Scott be fitted for a combination safety seat.**

The following are child safety seat selection criteria that should be shared with parents during car seat distribution activities:

- Infants under 1 year **and** less than 20 pounds must be placed in a rear facing position.
- Infants less than one year **and** over 20 pounds ride in a seat approved for heavier infants **and** they must still be rear facing.
- A child over 1 and at least 20 pounds may be placed forward facing (Note: It is generally recommend that children be kept facing the rear as long as the child meets the height and weight recommendations for rear facing).
- A child between 20-40 pounds should be in child safety seat with a full harness.
- Once the child is over 40 pounds and/or their shoulders are above the top set of strap slots, that child should be placed in a booster seat. Select a booster seat that will position the to fit the lap/shoulder belt fit properly:
 - Lap belt rides low and is on top of the legs, not the belly.
 - Shoulder belt crosses the chest and doesn't touch neck.
- Once the child is about 4' 9" tall and weighs approximately 80 pounds, the adult lap and shoulder belts will fit them properly.

These are basic recommendations; always have parents consult their vehicle & child safety seat owners manual for specific information pertaining to their situation.

PHASE 4: Hands-on Skills Training

Preferably this activity will be held outside so the parents can practice installing the child safety seat in their vehicle or the vehicle they use most often.

Parents will be working with the safety seat they'll be using with their child. At the start of the Hands-on Skills training, the staff and/or CPS Partners will demonstrate to parents how to properly use and install the child safety seat.

After the demonstration the parents will demonstrate the proper hands-on skills required to install their safety seat correctly.

The time involved in this phase will vary with the complexity of the safety seat. For example:

- A belt-positioning booster provides a parent a minimum of difficulty.
- A combination seat (high-back booster with 5 pt. harness) with LATCH system provides for a more complex child safety seat installation, and would require additional training time.

Another factor that will affect how much time this section takes is the parent's ability to learn a new skill. The Coordinator will need to allow enough time for everyone to master their installation skills during the training period.

During a distribution activity, it is important to have an adequate number of assistants to help parents during the skills training. As mentioned earlier, the Ride Safe Coordinator may wish to ask CPS partners to assist with the skills training of the parents during these events. A list of possible CPS partners is provided below:

- CPS-trained Head Start staff
- CPS-trained Tribal police
- CPS-trained CHRs, PHNs and other Tribal CPS certified staff
- CPS-trained Environmental Health Officer
- CPS-trained Injury Prevention Specialist.

During the skills training Coordinators should try to group the parents by the type of car seat (*convertible, combination high-back booster with 5 pt. harness, high-back belt positioning booster and low-back booster*) they will be using. It would be best to pair the most experienced CPS Staff/Partners with parents that have the more complex child safety seat installations.

Following this recommendation will allow the instructors to be able to stay focused on one type of safety seat.

PHASE 5: Follow-Up (Home Visits)

Home visits have the potential to make a positive influence on parental behavior. The potential benefits of conducting a Ride Safe follow-up home visit will be that the parent(s) will be inclined to continue or resume the use of the child safety seat, and correct any mis-use issues.

The rationale behind conducting follow-up is that in order for the program to have the desired effect (increase child safety seat usage), the parents will need to have safety seat education and hands-on skills training with their

new or existing safety seat(s). Simply providing the safety seat to the parents is not enough to get them to use their child safety seat. After the safety seat education and skills training have been provided, the follow-up visit will help reinforce skills and promote a positive safety habit.

Another benefit of the follow-up visit is that it serves as a tool for evaluating the Ride Safe program. When the home visitors fill out the second part of the *Ride Safe Tracking Sheet* for each family, they will be providing the Ride Safe program with valuable evaluation information. When completed correctly, these sheets offer a view of how the program was implemented at your site and/or if your site encountered any barriers to implementing the program. *This is important for continued funding of the Ride Safe Program!*

Through the data collected, the Ride Safe Coordinator and the EHO will be able to improve the program to better fit the needs of the community in the future.

1. When and How to Conduct Home Visits

It's important to conduct follow-up visits with families *at least two months* after they have received their child safety seat and well before the end of the school year. The timing of these follow up visits is important since research studies have indicated that home visits can be effective in reinforcing knowledge and use of safety devices.

Follow-up visits should be announced ahead of time with parents or childcare providers. Refer to the sample letter at the end of this guide to use when announcing this activity to your Head Start families.

They should also be conducted in person (preferably with the parent or individual that received the child safety seat from the Head Start) and at the parent's home. Try to make sure the child and safety seat will be at the home during the follow-up visit. Use the family's original Ride Safe Tracking Sheet (in which the Initial Encounter data were entered) to document each home visit (see Ride Safe Tracking Sheet form in the *Forms/Data Guide*).

During the follow-up visit the home visitor will:

1. Check to see if the child safety seat is still available
2. Have the parent demonstrate the proper installation of the seat
3. If the parent has a problem the Home Visitor will demonstrate the correct way of installing the child safety seat.

Liability Waiver:

For Ride Safe sites that may experience concerns from Tribal staff about liability issues when providing/installing child safety seats, it is

recommended that the Head Start Attorney or Tribal Attorney draft a liability waiver. A sample liability waiver is provided in the *Forms/Data Guide* for use as a template for your child safety seat distribution program.

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT LETTER: This sample can be used to provide information to parents and childcare providers about Ride Safe Program activities.



**BIG BEAR
Head Start
RIDE SAFE PROGRAM**

P.O. Box 888
Happy Town, MN

Phone (888) 444-0000 Fax (888) 444-0001

MEMO

To: Big Bear Head Start Parents

From: Kay Straw, Health, Safety and Nutrition Coordinator

Subject: Child Safety Seat Distribution

Date: October 4th , 2006

Our new child safety seats have arrived and we are pleased to inform you that a child safety seat education, skills training and distribution event will be held at the Big Bear Head Start on **October 23rd from 5 to 6:45 PM**. As many of you know from reading the Head Start News Letter, it is critical to your child's safety that they are transported in a child safety seat on each and every ride. That way you can help protect them from injury in the event of a car crash.

Big Bear Head Start staff and our Head Start and Child Passenger Safety Partners (Tribal Police, Tribal Home Health and the Environmental Health Officer) will provide you with child passenger safety education, hands on skills training and assist you with the installation of your new child safety seat on **October 23, 2006**.

It's important that you bring to this event your child and the vehicle you use most often to transport your child. All individuals that transport the child are encouraged to come to the training so they too will know how to use the child safety seat correctly.

Child care will be provided during the training session and snacks and refreshments will be served to participants.

We're all looking forward to seeing you on October 23rd. Please call me if you need more information or have any questions.

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER: This sample can be used to provide information to parents and childcare providers about follow-up home visits to assess child passenger safety seat use.



**BIG BEAR
Head Start
*RIDE SAFE PROGRAM***

P.O. Box 2150
Happy Town, MN

Phone (888) 444-0000 Fax (888) 444-0001

Ride Safe Program Home Visits Starting In January

Use of child safety seats is important in protecting our most cherished gift -- our children -- from motor vehicle crash injuries. As you know, the Big Bear Head Start has been participating in the ***Ride Safe*** Child Passenger Safety Program. This program provides child safety seats and child passenger safety training to parents and children.

During the next phase of the Ride Safe Program, we will be conducting home visits in [insert month here] to install child car seats for those that missed the [insert months here] distribution events. Later in [insert months here] we will be conducting follow up visits with you to check on the child safety seat(s) that you received from this program. Family Service Advocates and Home Visitors will be making unannounced visits, but if you would like to schedule a visit, please call me at [insert phone number here].

Thank you for participating in this important program. By working together, we can protect our children from the tragedy of motor vehicle crash injury. If you would like more information or have any questions, please call or visit me at the Head Start.

Sincerely,

[Insert coordinator name here]
Ride Safe Coordinator