

White Earth Head Start and Parents Work Together to Prevent Injuries

Motor vehicle crashes (MVC's) are the leading cause of death for American Indian children, teens, and adults from 1 – 44 years old. Between 1989-1998, the MVC death rate for Minnesota American Indians was almost three times higher than the Minnesota All-Races rate. Use of child car seats reduces the risk of death riding in cars by 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers. Yet surveys show that car seat usage rates are very low in many Reservation communities.



Chantel Hanks, White Earth Head Start Student

Buckled for Love!

The White Earth, Minnesota, Head Start began a booster seat distribution program in 2001. They provide parent education and booster seat installation for families enrolled in the Head Start program. Booster seats are obtained from Indian Health Service, the Ford Boost America! Program, and the State of Minnesota.



Kay Sunram, White Earth Health, Nutrition, and Safety Coordinator with a booster seat

Mrs. Ruby Hanks and her daughter, Chantel, received their car seat classroom instruction from the Head Start in November 2001. After the class, Kay Sunram, the Health, Nutrition, and Safety Coordinator selected a Ford Boost America! low back booster seat and showed Mrs. Hanks how to install it in her vehicle.

The time and effort taken by the car seat program were rewarded one month later when their vehicle was broad-sided by tow truck. During the collision, Mrs. Hanks and Chantel were both restrained and received minimal injuries. Another adult in the vehicle was not restrained and was knocked unconscious.

Due to the efforts of the White Earth Head Start and the diligence of Mrs. Hanks, Chantel was spared potentially serious injuries.