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**SAFE KIDS Urges Parents and Caregivers to
Get Their Child Safety Seats Inspected**

SELMA – Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children age 3 to 6 and 8 to 14. Safety experts report that between 80% and 90% of car seats are installed or used incorrectly. That’s why the Partnership for Children of Johnston County is urging all parents and caregivers to have their seats checked. **SAFE KIDS Johnston County** is sponsoring a Child Passenger Safety Checkpoint on **Saturday, September 12** as part of Child Passenger Safety Week (September 12-18). Nationally certified technicians will be available to provide on-site child safety seat inspections and provide education from **10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** in the parking lot of **Smithfield Pre-Owned and the Partnership for Children of Johnston County at the corner of Hwy 301 and Hwy 70-A in Selma.**

“It’s the responsibility of every parent and caregiver out there to make sure their children are safely restrained – every trip, every time,” said Christina Peterson, Coordinator for Safe Kids Johnston County. “We are urging everyone to get their child safety seats inspected. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes.”

In 2007, among children under 5, an estimated 358 lives were saved from the use of child safety seats and booster seats. If all children under the age of 5 were restrained, an additional 71 children would have been saved.

For maximum child passenger safety, Ms. Peterson said parents and caregivers should refer to the following *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on age and size:

1. For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4’9” tall).
4. When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4’9” tall) they can use the adult seat belts in the back seat, if they fit properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

Remember: All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.

For more information on Child Passenger Safety Week, a national effort to remind parents and caregivers of the lifesaving effect child safety seats have in protecting young children, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/cps, www.pfcjc.org or call 202-0002.

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