



## News Release

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### **AAA SURVEY REVEALS “BOOST” IN CAR SEAT COMPLIANCE**

*Revised recommendations prompt one third of parents to make changes.*

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA, March 21, 2012** – On the one year anniversary of the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) updated [car seat recommendations](#), AAA survey reveals that outreach efforts are working and parents are getting the message. Over 90 percent of parents with a child under 13 reported being aware of the new guidelines, many heard of the change from their child's pediatrician.

By advising parents to keep toddlers rear-facing until age two, or until reaching the maximum height and weight for the seat, and recommending that older children between eight and 12 remain in a belt-positioning booster seat until 4 feet 9 inches tall, the AAP reinforced what safety groups had long advocated. According to AAA's survey, parents heeded the group's advice, with one in three (35 percent) changing the way their children under 13 ride in the car.

*“It's encouraging to find that many parents are aware of the recommendations and are taking these safety interventions seriously,” said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Relations for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “Parents are getting the message that moving a child to the next step prematurely is actually a downgrade in safety. Children should remain in their safety seat or booster seat until they outgrow it.”*

According to AAA's survey, when parents with a child under two were asked why they had not made a change based on the new recommendations, 82 percent reported no change was needed as they were already meeting or exceeding the new guidelines. Other reasons commonly cited included parents reporting their child was uncomfortable or unwilling to sit rear-facing, parents' reluctance to return a child to a rear-facing position after “graduating” to a forward-facing seat and the belief that the new recommendations were unnecessary.

With car seat manufacturers offering a wide array of car seats designed to accommodate larger toddlers in a rear-facing position, [AAA reminds parents that the safety benefits](#) of keeping children rear-facing far outweigh the convenience of a forward-facing seat. Studies show that children are five times less likely to be injured in a crash when they are properly restrained in a rear-facing car seat.

Surveyed parents of older children offered similar answers. Of those who did not adopt changes based on the new recommendations, seventy-seven percent reported their child was already meeting or exceeding guidelines. Other reasons cited for not making a change included the belief that the recommendations were too strict, their unwillingness to return their child to a booster seat after “graduating” to seat belt and concern over whether the child's friends also used a booster seat.

*“Seat belts are designed for adults and do not typically fit children until they have reached approximately 4 feet 9 inches tall,” warned Blumling. “Graduating a child from a booster seat too soon may result in injury, or even death, in the event of a crash.”*

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AAA developed a series of informational [videos](#) in which experts walk parents step-by-step through the new safety seat and booster seat guidelines as well as proper seatbelt use. With three out of four child safety seats not properly installed, consulting an expert can be critical to ensure that children are secured in the safest manner possible. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians are available to help parents with their car seat installation through local AAA offices, by visiting [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) or calling 866-SEATCHECK (866-732-8243).

*As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit [AAA.com](http://AAA.com) and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).*

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