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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**National Child Passenger Safety Week**

National Child Passenger Safety week will be celebrated September 18-24, 2016. The theme this year is booster seats.

Booster seats play an important role in transitioning from a forward facing car seat to a seat belt. “Many parents have questions regarding booster seats and the reasoning behind their usage”, states Kara Miller, a Certified Child Passenger Safety Instructor with the Taney County Health Department, “booster seats actually reduce the risk for serious injury by 45% for children aged 4-8, when compared to using a seat belt alone.” Miller goes on to state that, “seat belts are designed to restrain a 165-pound male in the event of a car accident, not children who in most cases weigh less than 80 pounds.” Booster seats are designed to “boost” children up so the lap belt sits on the child’s upper thighs and the shoulder belt not around their neck.

How do I know if my child is ready for a booster seat? Don’t rush to move your child to the next seat it is safer for your child to remain in their current seat until they reach the maximum weight OR height limit of their forward facing harnesses typically between 40 and 65 pounds.

What kind of booster seat should I use? The type of booster seat that should be used depends on if your vehicle is equipped with head rests or not. There are 2 types of booster seats, high-back booster seats which are used in vehicles with or without headrests or backless booster seats that are used only in vehicles that have head rests. It’s important to remember that a booster seat will not work correctly if it is used with just a lap belt. A lap and shoulder belt is the only correct way to use a booster seat.

What is the law in the state of Missouri? The law states that, “Children ages four through seven who weigh at least 40 pounds must be in an appropriate child safety seat OR booster seat until they are 80 pounds OR 4’9” tall. The fine for not having a child properly restrained is \$50 plus court costs.

My child finds it embarrassing to use a booster seat, any tips? Teach your child the importance of safety at a young age. Lead by example, always wear your seat belt, put the phone down when you are driving and find opportunities to talk about safety when you can. If your vehicle has head rests, using a backless booster will be less conspicuous. Children may be more willing to sit in a booster seat if they can see out the window and the seat belt is more comfortable.

For information on installing a booster seat, contact the Taney County Health Department at: 417-334-4544 or 417-546-4725 to make an appointment with a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.

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