KTTV FOX 11 PREVIEW

Surprising Facts and Tips on Automobile Child Safety Restraints To Be Featured

This week, First 5 LA and KTTV Fox 11 present a “Good Beginnings” report on children and car safety.

Part of an ongoing series of TV news segments on early learning, health and safety, this week’s installments will provide expert advice to parents and caregivers on how to properly restrain infants and young children in vehicles.

Scheduled to air Thursday 8-9 a.m. and 10-11 p.m., and Friday 8-9 a.m., the video package and studio interview will shed new light on a subject about which many parents are surprising ill-informed.

Each day, five children are killed in automobile accidents in the U.S. and another 586 are injured in cars daily, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Officials say that many of these deaths and injuries are preventable with proper safety restraints, but half of the children who died last year weren’t restrained, and 85-95 percent of infant and child car seats are improperly installed, says the California Highway Patrol.

“There 100 different types of car seats and parents need to be aware of how to choose one that fits their vehicle and their child, and then properly install and use it each and every time they start up the engine,” said Norm Kellems, an Los Angeles Police officer who specializes in carseat safety.

Fox 11 cameras follow Kellems as he stops drivers who may be in violation of the California law that requires all children be buckled in the back seat with a child seat or booster until age 6 or 60 pounds.

For information, visit www.first5la.org.

West LA Child Care Provider Among Seven Recognized at State Capitol

Mattie Robinson, a West LA home child care provider, was among seven in California recently honored for their commitment to improving the quality of child care by the State Legislature and public broadcast stations, KVIE (Sacramento) and KCET (Los Angeles).
Safety Reminders for Parents of Kids Heading Back to School

With summer quickly winding down, parents and children are preparing for another school year. Here are some reminders to parents and caregivers about precautions that will ensure a safe back-to-school season:

1) Avoid drawstrings on children’s clothing as they can catch on playground equipment or cause accidental entanglement.
2) Wear the appropriate helmet for riding bikes, scooters, skateboards, etc.
3) Avoid playgrounds that don’t have a shock-absorbing surfaces like wood chips, sand, mats, etc.
4) Avoid exposed playground hardware or free-hanging ropes, which can catch on clothing or cause strangulation.

For more information, visit www.cpsc.gov

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

"I just treat all the children who come into my home as if they were my own," said Robinson, who currently cares for a dozen children, from infants to preschoolers. Among the innovative programs she has introduced in her 14 years as a home child care provider are weekly Spanish classes to give children a head start on bilingual skills and college scholarship funds for each of her children, starting from infancy.

In ceremonies at the State Capitol, Robinson and the other honorees were recognized for the important role that informal child care providers play in raising pre-school age children and preparing them for kindergarten.

In California, an estimated 65 percent of children up to age 4 are either in the care of a parent or informal caregiver.

First 5 LA-Sponsored KCET Series for Parents & Caregivers to Go National

"A Place of Our Own" and "Los Niños en Su Casa," the bilingual KCET series co-sponsored by First 5 LA, will be offered to 354 PBS member stations nationwide, beginning with the third-season launch in 2007.

The Emmy and Peabody award-winning English and Spanish-language programs are aimed at parents and caregivers who want to help young children develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Topics include all aspects of early childhood, from health and nutrition to developmental milestones and early identification of special needs.

The programs target early learning by addressing pre-literacy skills and early math recognition and early science and diversity appreciation.

Currently seen on PBS stations across California, the series is also sponsored by BP and First 5 California.

Debi Gutierrez, host of "A Place of Our Own", and Alina Rosario, host of "Los Niños en Su Casa", provide fun and engaging half-hour episodes with parents and caregivers who provide insight on how to raise smart, healthy and happy children.

The programs are accompanied by extensive bilingual websites and hands-on workshops. Searchable by topic, information is available at www.aplaceofourown.org and www.losninosensucasa.org.

Family Bed Precautions Advised After Newborn Dies at Local Hospital

Following the death of a newborn baby who apparently suffocated while sleeping between his parents in a shared bed at a local hospital, renewed warnings are being issued by experts regarding the "family bed."
“Parents have shared beds with their children throughout history in many cultures, but precautions must be taken,” said Deanne Tilton Durfee, a First 5 LA Commissioner and executive director of LA County’s Inter-Agency on Child Abuse and Neglect. When sharing a bed with an infant, a parent or caretaker should consider the following safety precautions:

- Make sure there are no gaps between the mattress and the bedframe and bedding fits tightly around the mattress.
- Avoid soft bedding and other items that can cause suffocation, including comforters, pillows, featherbeds, stuffed animals, etc.
- Put infants on their backs to sleep to reduce risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Adults should avoid smoking, drugs, and alcohol due to association with a higher risk of SIDS.
- Avoid placing a bed or crib near window blind cords or curtain sashes; and strings or ties on night clothes.
- Do not bedshare in a waterbed.
- Do not sleep with baby on sofas or overstuffed chairs and do not put baby to sleep alone in an adult bed.

For more information visit www.sidsandkids.org.

GRANTEE PROFILE

Lennox School Readiness Center Helps Parents Address Early Learning Delays

When Lariza Lopez enrolled her 2-year-old son, Mauricio Arias, in a “Mommy and Me” program orientation, teachers at the Lennox School Readiness Center La Casita immediately noticed he seemed delayed in his speech. “Mauricio was signing with his hands, but never tried to speak,” said S.P. Andrade, director of the program, funded by First 5 LA. “His mother had taught him to use American sign language but his verbal skills weren’t age-appropriate, so we referred Mauricio to Westside Regional Center for speech therapy.”

Meanwhile, mother and son continued to participate twice weekly in the Lennox center’s school readiness program, where they joined other parents and children in songs and games that enhance language skills.

With early intervention and parent education, Mauricio’s parents and teachers have helped him catch up to his peers developmentally. Today, at age 4, he speaks in full sentences and is considered “kindergarten-ready.”

All children in the program are assessed and received help in five areas: socio-emotional, language, fine motor, gross motor, and problem-solving.

The Lennox center, located near Inglewood, serves more than 200 families a year, with about 10 percent of children being referred for outside services.
"We keep a close eye on children who are significantly delayed and need professional help, but for the most part, our goal is to empower parents to work with their own children daily."

For information, contact Andrade at sp_andrade@lennox.k12.ca.us or (310) 330-4950.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Kim Durdin-James Helps Moms Learn To Breastfeed Exclusively From the Start

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline: “Champions for Our Children.”

Kim Durdin-James is a certified lactation educator and consultant, and member of the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles. She is former co-chair and founding member of the Washington DC Breastfeeding Taskforce, where she worked as a WIC breastfeeding peer counselor.

She has been a long-time leader for La Leche League International, a mother-run volunteer organization that helps women learn to breastfeed.

Durdin-James holds a BA in apparel design from the Parsons School of Design and became interested in lactation when she joined La Leche League upon the birth of her first child.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Color Purple by Alice Walker.

What makes you happy?
Looking into the eyes of children, family dinners, and picnics at the beach.

What makes you angry?
War, injustice, rape, and violence.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
Harriet Tubman.

What is your idea of a perfect world?
Where all children would be breastfed or receive breast milk if their own mothers could not nurse them, because we know just breastfeeding a child for one year would prevent a great majority of childhood and adult diseases.

What is the greatest challenge faced by LA County children and families?
Pollution.

Which living person do you most admire?
My mother, who is an outstanding example of what a mother should be.

What is your motto?
"Joy is a net of love, which we use to catch souls."
--Mother Teresa